

History
Of
The Villages
Bocce Club

2002-2007

This copy belongs to Bocce Club Treasurer

2002

The first organizational meeting was held on September 12 at Foothill Center. Carm Grande placed a small notice in The Villager newspaper, and was surprised when more than 100 people showed up. Everyone in attendance signed up for the Club that night.

The Villages bocce courts were dedicated on November 12. They were installed by Parola Construction Co., which also contributed four benches. Scoreboards, bulletin boards, and tall tables at the ends of the courts were built by members of the Bocce Club, under the direction of John Alden. More than 250 Villagers attended the dedication. In recognition of her long-time efforts to have the courts constructed, June McCann was awarded the privilege of "opening the courts" by throwing the first ball.

In the absence of any formal organization, Carm Grande pretty much handled all the administrative work by himself during these first months. He held a few informal clinics before the end of the year to introduce players to the finer points of the game, and there was open play through December, but no formal competition.

The Bocce Club submitted its request for recognition to the Villages Club Board on November 13, and received approval on December 10.

By the end of the year, more than 300 Villages residents had enrolled in the club, and there were more than 80 teams engaged in informal competition.

2003

The first Villages Bocce Club general meeting was held on Sunday, January 12, in Cribari Auditorium. The initial Board of Directors included:

Carm Grande, President
Rosemary Eagan, Vice President
Dee Hurley, Secretary
Dori Phifer, Treasurer
John Alden
Jim Henderson
Richard Riggs
Madie Stusnick
Marlyn Unger

The first set of ByLaws was adopted by the Board on February 3.

The first team tournament, called The Inaugural Tournament, was held in April. Winners were the Holy Rollers: Frank and Marilyn Penn, and Jerry and Joonja Sachs.

A Summer Tournament was held on June 28. Winners were the Bocce Bums: Laura Trabin, Frank Ucolano, Bruce Flesher, and Richard Riggs.

The July 27 Mixed Doubles Tournament was won by Art Lind and Laura Trabin.

The first Round Robin Tournaments, under the direction of June McCann, were held May 4 to August 9. To distinguish them from other tournaments, these were designated by Roman numerals. Winners of No. I were the Crackers: Betty Fisher, Lavina Mattheis, June McCann, and Thelma Wellman. Winners of No. II were the Bocce Bums: Bruce Flesher, Art Lind, Laura Trabin, and Frank Ucolano.

In the second Round Robin Tournament held from August to November, winners of No. III were the Hi Rollers: Virginia and John Gavin, and Jim and Ruth Spirakis. Winning team in No. IV was the Bella Vitas: Ralph Chiapello, Gloria Pontzius, and Bob and Mary Alice Puppo.

The first Villages Tournament, which was the predecessor to the Villages Challenge, was held in August. Cribari was the winner, with a

team of June McCann, Betty Fisher, and Lorraine and Cappy Cappellieri

A General Membership meeting was held on November 2. President Carm Grande and other members of the Board presented a review of Club finances, reviewed the year's events, explained the change in reservation times to 5:00 in the Winter, and asked members to keep the storage box locked, to leave their pets at home, and to help in keeping the courts and surrounding areas clean and tidy. Membership at this time was 473.

The last Round Robin Tournament started in November and carried over into February of 2004. Winners of No. V were the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, and Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer. The winning team in No. VI was the Bella Vitas: Ralph Chiapello, Gloria Pontzius, and Bob and Mary Alice Puppo. A playoff match between the two winners was introduced for the first time; The Bella Vitas were winners of this session.

2004

The first Club-sponsored Couples Pyramid Tournament was held in January and February. Winners were Annalies Henis and Virginia Fife.

At the first Board meeting of the year on January 27, retiring President Carm Grande made a lengthy presentation that outlined the Club activities that were to be transferred to the incoming Board. The following officers were elected:

Annalies Henis, President
Richard Riggs, Vice President
Fran Ballantyne, Secretary
Dori Phifer, Treasurer
Bill Fletcher, Court Manager
John Alden, Publicity Manager

Other members of the Board were May DeLucchi, Rosemary Eagan, and Jim Henderson.

A General membership Meeting was held March 7 in Cribari Auditorium. The Club policies were outlined by the new Board, and there was a discussion of the year's event.

At the March 16 Board meeting, it was announced that Jim Henderson had resigned, but no replacement was named. At the suggestion of Annalies Henis, a Friday night Bocce Bash was first discussed by the Board at this meeting, and was approved on a trial basis. Bill Fletcher spearheaded the effort to get these informal competitions going, and they turned out to be among the Club's most popular events for years to come. It was also decided that Pyramid tournaments shall be considered an ongoing, long-term activity, to be scheduled at the same time as the Round Robin tournaments.

By the April 13 Board meeting, May DeLucchi had also resigned. Ruth Spirakis was named as replacement for her, and Virginia Gavin was selected as a replacement for Jim Henderson. It was decided to drop the Tuesday-Thursday drop-in sessions for lack of interest.

At the May 11 meeting, it was announced that Vice President Richard Riggs had resigned. Bill Callery was named as his replacement. It was at this meeting that the size of the pallino and bocce balls was standardized for all tournaments.

On June 8th, the Board decided that the computer-generated play sheets designed for the Friday Bocce Bash shall be provided only for that event and for VBC-sponsored events, and not for events sponsored by other organizations.

A special Board meeting was held on May 24 to consider the issue of adding umbrellas to provide shade at the street end of the courts. The Villages administration had approved the idea, and the Club was free to proceed with the purchase. Selecting the right umbrellas and having their installation approved by The Villages DAC turned out to be a lengthy process; Bill Callery was chief negotiator for the Bocce Club.

The next Round Robin Tournament was held from March to May. Winners of No. VII were the Pepes 4: Bill and Marie Durante, and Cappy and Lorraine Cappellieri. The winning team in No. VIII was the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, and Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer. Pepes 4 won the Playoff.

The second Pyramid Tournament of the year was held in April, May and June. Winners of No. 1 were Annelies Henis and Virginia Fife. Winners of No. 2 were Bruce Anderson and Ed Flory. Bruce and Ed won the playoff and were declared Champions.

In the June-September Round Robin Tournament, winners of No. IX were the Hi Rollers: Virginia and John Gavin and Jim and Ruth Spirakis. The winning team in No. X was the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, and Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer. The Hi Rollers won the Playoff.

On July 6, the Board approved June McCann's request for a rule change that prohibits the use of substitute players during the final 10 days of a Pyramid Tournament.

After considerable delay, the first umbrella was finally installed at the street end of the courts in June.

A fund-raising bus trip to Table Mountain Casino was held on July 28. VBC members and guests paid \$20 apiece for the one-day excursion. The \$500 profit was deposited in the VBC checking account.

Winners of the July-October Pyramid Tournament were Marie and Bill Durante in No. 1 and Bob and Liz Giarratana in No. 2. Bob and Liz won the playoff.

The final Round Robin Tournament of the year was held from September to November. Winners of No. XI were the Pro's and Con's: Bob and Rika Goodwin, Marie and Bill Durante, Annelies Henis and Laura Trabin. The winning team in No. XII was the Meat-A-Balls:

Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer, and Bob and Liz Giarratana. The Pro's and Con's won the Playoff.

At the September meeting, the Board decided to review the By-Laws; Ruth Spirakis assumed responsibility for the review. The new version included a provision for a 10th Board member.

The first official Villages Challenge was held on Sunday, September 25. Ten teams competed. Highland Village took first place with a team of Art Lind, Bruce Anderson, Bill Fletcher, Virginia Fife, Lavina Matteis and Ralph Chiapello. Second place went to Village Sonata, with the team of Shirley and Bob Ritzheimer, Jeanne Noteware, and Lee Wade. After the playoff game, there was a very successful party to honor the winners. The Bocce Club provided soft drinks, wine, and cake; members brought snacks.

On October 12, the Board decided not to allow any tournaments or parties to be scheduled in conflict with the Friday Bocce Bash.

At its November 9 meeting, the Board decided to hold meetings only as needed, instead of monthly, and to proceed carefully with its request for more bocce courts, because of the costs involved

A General Meeting was held on November 21 in Cribari Auditorium. Approximately 30 Club members were in attendance. It was announced that Friday night Bocce Bashes would start in April. Membership fees of \$9 for couples and \$6 for singles was maintained. The following Board members were elected for 2005:

John Alden
Bill Callery
Rosemary Eagan
Virginia Gavin
Carm Gingerelli
Al Harris
Annelies Henis
Ruth Spirakis

2005

At its January 11 meeting, the Board adopted the revised Club By-Laws and added a position of Secretary. These were the new Officers:

Annelies Henis, President
Bill Callery, Vice President
Phyllis McDonnell, Secretary
John Alden, Treasurer
Virginia Gavin, Membership Manager

Subsequent to the meeting, President Henis submitted the revised By-Laws and request for another Board member to the Villages Club Board, which gave its approval on January 20.

After considering several options, the Board decided at its April 12 meeting to add more umbrellas, on both the street and clock ends of the courts. John Alden, Bob Greenfield, and Bill Fletcher installed the umbrellas and tables in June.

At the March meeting, action was taken to formalize the master calendars for court reservations, to eliminate conflicts.

Winners of the January-May Pyramid Tournament were Bruce Anderson and Art Lind in No. 1 and Virginia Fife and Jeanne Noteware in No. 2. Bruce and Art won the Playoff.

The first Round Robin Tournament of the year also was held from January to May. Winners of No. XIII were the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer, and Bob and Penny Dorman. The winning team of No. XIV was the Ginger Snaps: Fran Ballantyne, Dori Phifer, Art Lind, Carm and Marilyn Gingerelli, and Bruce Anderson. The Meat-A-Balls won the Playoff.

At its July 12 meeting, the Board clarified its policy regarding court reservations by other Villages clubs and organizations. Courts may be reserved for multiple time periods only for tournaments, formally organized leagues, and special events scheduled by Villages Board-recognized organizations and clubs. No one group may make more than three reservations per year. This also marked the start of the Club's program to insert an article in The Villager regularly, to create more interest in bocce in general and Club activities in particular.

Winners of the May-September Pyramid Tournament were Ruth Battistelli and Bill Fletcher in No. 1 and Bruce Anderson and Ralph Chiapello in No. 2. Bruce and Ralph won the Playoff.

In the second Round Robin Tournament, also held from May to September, the winners of No. XV were the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer, and Bud and Penny Dorman. The winning team in No. XVI was the Pro's and Con's: Bob and Rika Goodwin, Marie and Bill Durante, Annelies Henis and Laura Trabin. The Meat-A-Balls won the Playoff.

The Villages Bocce Challenge was held on Sunday, September 25. For the second year in a row, Highland Village finished first among 10 entries with a team of Art Lind, Bruce Anderson, Bill Fletcher, Ralph Chiapello, Virginia Fife and Lavina Matteis. Also for the second year in a row, Sonata Village finished second with a team of Shirley and Bob Ritzheimer, Lee Wade, Tad McGrath, Jeanne Noteware, and Bill Rodman.

In the September-November Pyramid Tournament, Bob and Liz Giarratana won No. 1, and Judy Gergurich and Lee Wade won No. 2. Bob and Liz won the Playoff.

In the September-November Ladder Tournament, Bob Goodwin won the Men's competition, and Bob Giarratana was Runner-up. On the women's side, Liz Giarratana was the winner and Annelies Henis was runner-up. Liz won the Playoff between the winner of the women's ladder and the winner of the men's ladder.

A Round Robin Mini-Tournament was held from September to November; only four teams participated because of the bad weather. Finishing in First Place were the Misfits: Bob and Liz Giarratana, Art Lind, Bruce Anderson, Vicki Linscott, and Frank Ucolano. Second-Place finishers were the Meat-A-Balls: Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, and Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer.

At the October 11 meeting, the Board decided not to extend the Bocce Bash season, and to end events on October 18, as originally planned. At Bill Fletcher's request, sign-up times for court reservations were moved from 6:30 to 5 p.m. when Daylight Savings Time ends.

At the November 8 meeting, the Board accepted a formal description of the Court Manager's position, as presented by Bill Fletcher. It was also decided to wash and dry the umbrellas prior to winter storage.

A General Meeting was held on November 27. About 30 members attended. Club activities were reviewed, and the new Board members were elected. Membership stood at 498 at the end of the year.

2006

These Board members and officers were installed at the January 10 meeting:

Bob Ritzheimer, President
Bob Iacopi, Vice President
Phyllis McDonnell, Secretary and Social Director
John Alden, Treasurer
Virginia Gavin, Membership and Publicity Manager
Lavina Matteis, Court Manager
Al Harris, Bocce Bash Manager
Shirley Ritzheimer, Clinics Manager
Joanne Cooke
Rosemary Eagan

At this meeting, the Board clarified two of the most confusing tournament rules:

1. In Pyramid tournaments, a "challenging pair" may not play the same pair twice in a row.
2. In Ladder tournaments, points shall be accumulated continuously during the entire playing period. The winner is the team with the most points at the end of the 1 ½ hour play period. A team may concede defeat at any time during the match.

The second Board meeting of the year was held February 13. The procedure to be used by Villages clubs in reserving the bocce courts was once again restated and clarified. The Board also voted to update the plaques at the courts to include the winners of the 2005 tournaments.

At its March 13 meeting, the Board made the decision to bring all Round Robin, Ladder, Pyramid and Challenge tournaments, including organization and financial support, under the jurisdiction of The Bocce Club. From this point forward, all participants in these tournaments must be members of The Villages Bocce Club.

It was also decided that unless the Board is approached directly with a specific request to conduct some activity in conjunction with the September NFL Golf Tournament, the Club will not sponsor any events this year.

Bob Iacopi was designated to write the history of the Bocce Club.

On April 10, the Board adopted in principle a policy stating that the Club is not sanctioned to authorize bocce events sponsored by

agencies outside The Villages, and any such agency that wants to hold an event on the bocce courts must first request approval of the Villages Club Board. Once such approval is granted, the Bocce Club will become involved in scheduling the courts and monitoring the event.

Bocce Bashes started on April 14, and continued through the summer and fall, with generally good attendance, except for those days with inclement weather.

A series of clinics were held between January and October to introduce bocce to interested newcomers. Shirley Ritzheimer organized the events, and she enlisted the help of veteran players to help the new people learn the rules and techniques of play. About 70 Villagers participated in the clinics.

In the February-May Round Robin Tournaments, winners of XVII were the Meat-A-Balls—Lee Wade, Judy Gergurich, Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer, and Penny and Bud Dorman. The winners of XVIII were the Bocce Bunch: Fran Ballantyne, Art Lind, Dori Phifer, Ed Franz and Bruce Anderson. The Bocce Bunch won the playoff.

The Spring Pyramid winners were John Gavin and Bob Goodwin.

The Ladder winners in the February-May tournament were Lee Wade for the men, and Virginia Fife for the women. Virginia Fife won the playoff.

At the May Board meeting, plans for the court improvements were finalized, for submission to The Villages DAC. Rules and Procedures of the game were once again reviewed and clarified, to avoid confusion in scoring.

In August, the Board voted to recommend a change the dues structure. Starting in 2007, membership will be \$5 per person, with no "couples" fee. It was also decided that if large groups reserve the courts for special events, but do not use them, then the courts would be available for open play after the usual 10-minute grace period.

Winners of the XIX Round Robin were the Pallino Chasers—Virginia Fife, Aloha Anderson, Ed Flory, Jeanne Noteware, and Eve Wright. The winners of XX were the Meat-a-Balls--Lee Wade, Judy Gergurich, Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer, and Penny and Bud Dorman. The Meat-a-Balls won the playoff.

The May-August Pyramid had Bob and Liz Giarratana winning No. 1 and Bob and Shirley Ritzheimer winning No. 2. The Ritzheimers won the playoff.

In the Summer Ladder competition, Bob Ritzheimer was the men's winner and Liz Giarratana was the women's winner. Bob won the playoff.

At the September 18 meeting, The Board voted to provide financing for the first major improvements to the bocce courts since their construction in 2002. The Bocce Club would transfer \$4,020 to The Villages G&CC, which in turn would contract with the Parola Construction and Marco Electric Companies to extend electric power from the Gazebo to the clock end of the courts, install a motion sensor light to illuminate the pathways after dark, enlarge the redwood storage case, and install a concrete pad and steps to serve as foundation for a plastic storage shed, to be purchased by the Bocce Club. All of the work, including new landscaping, was completed before the end of the year.

The Villages Challenge was held on September 25, under the direction of Fran Ballantyne. Highlands Village was the winner once again with a team of Bruce Anderson, Ralph Chiapello, Lavina Matteis, Art Lind, and Virginia Fife. The team from Valle Vista Village finished second--Carm and Marilyn Gingerelli, Annalies Henis, and Julien Kelley. Carm Grande served as Head Referee.

Winners of this year's Fall Pyramid Tournament were Bill and Marie Durante.

In the Fall Ladder Tournament, Fran Ballantyne won the women's event and Cappy Cappellieri was the winner in the men's event. Cappy won the playoff.

A General membership Meeting was held on November 12 in Cribari Auditorium. President Ritzheimer and committee chairpersons reported on the year's activities, and submitted the recommendation on the change in the dues structure, which was approved by the membership.

The Fall Round Robin Tournament concluded on November 18. Winners of XXI were The Hi Rollers--Ruth and Jim Spirakis, John and Virginia Gavin, and Bruce Anderson--and winners of XXII were The Pallino Chasers--Virginia Fife, Aloha Anderson, Ed Flory, Eve Wright, and Jeanne Noteware. The Pallino Chasers won the playoff. Following the final matches, a potluck dinner and award ceremony was held at Foothill Center.

At the December 15 Board meeting, the following officers and committee chairpersons were elected for 2007:

President: Bob Ritzheimer
Vice President: Bob Girarratana

Secretary: Phyllis McDonnell
Treasurer: Virginia Fife
Court Manager: Lavina Matteis
Membership/Publicity: Liz Giarratana
Clinics: Shirley Ritzheimer
Bocce Bash: Ralph Chiapello and Joanne Cooke
Social: Phyllis McDonnell
Liaison: Bob Iacopi

The Board also made announced its intention to (1) review the Club ByLaws; (2) audit the Club financial records; and (3) schedule a social event to recognize retiring and new board members, all in early 2007. This social event will be in addition to the Bocce Club Dinner on January 11, 2007, at the Clubhouse.

After considering several alternatives, the Board decided that the new storage shed will have a combination lock, and the combination will be made available to Board members, Tournament Chairs, and Team Captains.

Membership remained above the 500 level at the end of the year.

2007

At its January 8 meeting, the Board decided to have tournaments run by committees instead of individuals, so everyone will have a chance to play without the burden of handling all the administrative details. The Board also voted to restrict players in the Challenge just to members of The Bocce Club. It was agreed that the Club should ask the VG&CC Board to commit reserve funds specifically for maintenance of the bocce courts.

The Club's first Installation Dinner was held on January 11 at The Clubhouse. About 80 members enjoyed a dinner prepared by the Clubhouse staff. Retiring Board members were recognized and the new Board officers were installed. This year's schedule of events was outlined, and all members were encouraged to participate.

A series of clinics, called Free Lessons in Bocce, started on February 8 and continued during the year under the leadership of Shirley Ritzheimer. Because of their success in attracting new players, and new members for The Bocce Club, they will be continued in future years.

At the February 12 Board meeting, it was announced that the books had been audited without incident. It was also revealed that a Bocce Reserve Fund already existed under the Gazebo heading in the Villages budget, so there was no need to ask for new funds. The new Tournament Committee, which met for the first time on February 5, includes Virginia Fife, Bob Giarratana, Tad McGrath and Ruth Spirakis, with Tournament Chairman June McCann serving as Temporary Committee Chairman until a new one is appointed. The Committee shall govern all future Bocce Club tournaments, including the Villages Challenge. It was at this meeting that The History of The Villages Bocce Club was first distributed.

Once the 2007 automatic billings were reviewed in February and the membership list purged, it turned out that the current membership totaled 460.

Because of the change in the start and stop dates for Daylight Saving Time, the Bocce Bashes started on March 16 and continued until November 2. Participation was good, except during inclement weather. An expanded Bocce Bash, nicknamed the Pumpkin Bash, was held on October 26 from 3 to 6 p.m. The Club provided soft drinks

and light snacks. A few participants showed up in costume, and a good time was had by all.

The Singles Pyramid Tournament started in February and ended in April. Bob Ritzheimer was the winner, and Virginia Fife and Margaret Richardson were runners-up; all the finalists were honored at the April 27 Bocce Bash.

At the March 12 meeting, the Board accepted June McCann's job analysis for Chairman of the Tournament Committee in anticipation of her resignation at the end of 2007. It was also decided that effective July 1, all tournament players must be members of The Bocce Club.

In April, the Board voted to improve the wording on the Bocce Bash sign and purchase an easel. It also decided to accept the VG&CC Activities office request to hold a family activity on July Fourth, following the parade. Bob Iacopi was placed in charge of the event.

The Spring Round Robin Tournament followed a new format. All 56 players who signed up by January 21 were assigned to teams according to skill level, in an attempt to "level the playing field" and get new players involved with the veterans. The ten teams were divided into two tournaments, The Amiable Adversaries and The Friendly Foes. Matches emphasized sociability and fun (no trophies), and unlimited changes of players during matches were allowed. The final day's tournament play on March 30 was followed by a "Grand Mingling," with each team in one tournament playing the matching team in the other tournament, and a pot luck dinner was held at Foothill Center in the evening. First place winner was the team of Lee Wade (Captain), Bill Cronquist, Bob Ritzheimer, Bud Dorman, and Bill Kelly. Second place went to the team of Virginia Fife (Captain), Judy Frey, John Gavin, Kathy Werner, Rosemary Eagan and Alice Krelle.

A new rule was introduced at the regular Spring Pyramid Tournaments that started in April--unless already scheduled to play a match, a challenged player must accept the challenge within 10 days, or forfeit the match and exchange places with the challenger. Because of the large turnout for the Spring Round Robin Tournaments--17 teams--the schedule was extended until August to allow all the teams to complete their games. Winners of No. XXIII were the High Rollers: Ruth Spirakis, John and Virginia Gavin, Bruce Anderson, Natalie Elefant and Bob Goodwin. Winners of No. XXIV were The Gladiators: Marie and Bill Durante, Lorraine and Cappy Cappelleri, Ruth Battistelli and Bill Fletcher. The High Rollers won the playoff.

Two of the umbrellas had to be replaced during the year because of general fatigue and some wind damage.

A general membership meeting was held on November 18 at Foothill Center. A few dozen members attended, and heard reports on our activities, our financial situation, and new directors for 2008.

At its final meeting of the year on December 11, the Board accepted donations of bocce ball sets from Board members to replace the worn-out balls at the courts, and also continued its ongoing investigation into the replacement of the side boards on the courts, and purchases of a vacuum and some new picnic tables that would be installed permanently near the bocce courts. It also reaffirmed the VG&CC and Club rules prohibiting any non-Villages resident from being a member of the Bocce Club.

New Board members for 2008 were introduced—Judy Gergurich, Lee Wade, Judy and Dick Frey, Bill Fletcher and Rosemary Eagan. Those entering their second year on the Board are Bob and Liz Giarratana, Virginia Fife and Ralph Chiapello. The following officers were elected:

President: Bob Giarratana
Vice President: Dick Frey
Secretary & Historian: Judy Gergurich
Treasurer: Virginia Fife
Membership & Publicity Chairperson: Liz Giarratana
Court Manager: Bill Fletcher
Bocce Bash Manager: Ralph Chiapello
Clinics Manager: Lee Wade
Social Chairperson: Rosemary Eagan
Tournament Chairperson: Judy Frey

Because of everyone's hard work, interest in The Bocce Club continues to grow, and membership was above the 500 level by the end of the year.