



PalatinePicklers.com

palatinepicklers@gmail.com

JANUARY, 2026 NEWSLETTER

HERE'S TO A HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR

This headline is valid again. Every year I expect to be pickleriffic. We have a few changes this year. Bob McGowan is handling the Fun Tournaments. Natalie Silverman is handling the Walkers. Stephanie Douglas is handling the Medalists. Someone yet to be named will, hopefully, handle Intramurals. Hopefully, someone else will handle our summer Thursday and Saturday mentoring. That's just arranging Mentors, as the Mentorees are walk-on. Feel free to email me your interest in stepping up into one of these roles. Could use a Newbie Manager too. That's really easy. I'll send you the edited photos and names. You just put first names under the pics in alpha order and send me a copy & paste Word document.

CHECK OUT THE UGLY HOLIDAY SWEATER STUFF



Down – Kathy, Natalie, Judy, Karen, Nichole, Alice, Chrissie. Up – Carole, Bob, Pam, Mary, Bill, Eileen, Jim, Tom, Joanie, Kent, John, Bear, Brian, Clay.

Last big one. Bob McGowan, new Fun Tournament Manager, says 12 Picklers will be his max.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL LOOK AT OUR SWEATERS



Alice



Bear



Bill



Bob



Brian



Carole



Chrissie



Clay



Eileen



Jim



Joanie



John



Judy



Karen



Kathy



Kent



Mary



Natalie



Nichole



Pam



Tom



. Sweaters: Judy 2nd, Bear 1st, Eileen & Katy tie for 3rd

Play: Tom 2nd, Bill 1st, Bob 3rd



Clay, Voting Tabulator & Scorekeeper

GOOD FRIENDS LOVED PLAYING WITH GOOD FRIENDS



They come in all heights



They shop in the same store

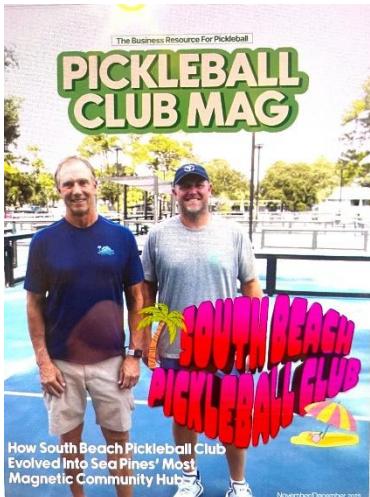


They can be a bit catty at times

This was my last creating/running of a Fun, Thursday tournament, after ten years. It's been a great run. Here are some of my tournaments: Oldest Men/Women, Youngest Men/Women, Family Fun for non spousal relative partners, Marathon (Falcon then Birchwood for total games, steps, points, Wrong Hand, Lefties, Bionic Bodies for metal in body not in mouth, Untall Ladies, Tree Toppers for 6'+ guys, Pajama Party, Widows, Single Adults, Red & Pink Valentine Couples, Halloween Costume Party, Pickle Haus move up or down every 15 mkinutes, Same at Pickler for 32 Picklers, Ugly Holiday Sweaters, Most Grandkids, Healthcare Workers, Non-Native (not born in IL), Petite Picklers (under XXX lb), Heavy Hitters (over 200 lb), Aging Leprechauns for oldest guys in green, Long Last Name (at least 8 letters), Closest to 70. Ditto for 60, Teachers, Most/Multiple Pets, Closest to July 4th birthday, Parent-Offspring, Most Siblings, Most Kids. There are probably more (lot of age-related), but that's wll I can remember just now. I have given Bob McGowan this list, in case he wants to keep some of these in his options. We have had one or two, Fun Tournaments each month forever. I'm so happy Bob will keep this tradition going. I do laugh at Bob's comment after my 20-Pickler Ugly Sweater Tournament (above). He said he'll not be running anything for more than 12 Picklers. I do understand that. This one was a LOT of work and required me to make a huge scoreboard.

LET'S GET BOB OFF TO A GOOD START

His first tournaments will be **Oldest Men and Oldest Women** ... depending on response, that will be either 8 or 12 Picklers in each of the side by side tournaments. It will be Thursday, January 15th, from 9 to about 11:45. As always lunch at Kelsey Road House a mile away follows. So email Bob at BobMcgowan1946@gmail.com that you want to participate **AND** include your **MMDDYY Date of Birth**. Hope to see you there.



WE MADE IT INTO A MAJOR PICKLEBALL MAGAZINE

Our small town pickleball club was recognized in the December issue of Pickleball Club Magazine. Check it out. Here's the link: <https://pickleballclubmag.com/2025/12/04/the-nov-dec-2025-issue-is-here/>. For some reason, I had to copy and paste this link into the destination target. We appear on page 30 and 31. This is a pretty big honor for us.

WE STILL NEED AN INTRAMURAL MANAGER

I will be happy to send you a How I Do It page. Of course, I'll give you the aging scoreboard that has court assignments on it ... and balls and tape to secure the scoreboard to Canlan's wall and a couple dry erase pens. This program has served well dozen of men and women (too lazy to check the numbers but surely over 50 of each gender), for the last three years. It would be a shame for this to just go away, because I need a new knee. So keep it alive. Email me at aokbarry@yahoo.com and ask for that sheet of how I've done it. For 2.5 years I enjoyed playing in these matches. Then I fell well below the 3.0-3.5 talent range it targets. I've gotten it going, before reading my Kindle, walkikng the track, or working on my pickleball laptop, until we were ready to go to lunch. I may still show up at Kelsey Road House at noon to join the group for lunch. It's so much fun. **NEWS FLASH-POSITION FILLED-SEE BELOW**

CHRISSIE LOOPER STEPPED UP

Chrissie thought about it, reviewed what's involved, and said she'd do it. Lyn Canger volunteered to be her backup/assistant. Both Lady Picklers have enjoyed being successful intramuralists. So, **EVERYONE**, please email Chrissie at TonyandChrissie@earthlink.net with the dates you Expect To Be Available. She'll put you on those ETBA lists and, on Sunday afternoons before each match, she'll invite 16 of you to participate. The next several dates are 1/6, 1/20, 2/3, 2/17, 3/3, 3/17, 3/31. This every other week schedule will continue all year. Give her as many dates as you'd like. Just be sure to let her know, if a conflict arises and you need to come off an ETBA list.

Thanks for saving intramurals, Chrissie.



MEET PICKLER NICHOLE GREENING

This young lady is REALLY likable and talented in so many ways. Let's get started. Nichole was born in August of 1986. She's so exacting she gave me 12:26 a.m. Monday the 25th. That event was in Joliet, IL. (OK, St. Joseph Hospital).



She attended Romeoville High, graduating in 2004.. While there Nichole played basketball and varsity softball for three years. Then she went to Aurora University, earning a BS in 2008. Her major was Athletic Training, and her minor was Biology. She was big on track and field, throwing both shot put and javelin. Her javelin throw of 105' remains in the school's top 10 ever. Of course, she was President of the Athletic Training Club for 3 years. Oh, this under achiever was also Homecoming Queen.



Next she attended Northern Illinois University, earning her MSEd (Masters in Education) degree in 2010. Her major was Exercise Physiology. Her minor was Sports Psychology. While there she taught in the Athletic Training Program for two years. She also worked summers for Easter Seals and the Northwest Special Recreation Organization as Special Olympics Coach for powerlifting and track & field.



Upon graduating, Nichole joined ATI (Athletic Therapeutic Institute) and spent seven years in Lockport HS and Lincoln Way Central HS. Then, in 2017, she joined the staff at Palatine High School as the Head Athletic Trainer.

The PHS Coed Cheer team made it to state. For her help all season, the team gave her this hockey stick they all signed.



Nichole met Kevin Hickey in DeKalb in 2018. He was finishing his bachelors program, while she was just starting her masters. He was home from the Marines, and they shared the same apartment building. They moved in together just as friends in June of 2009 and started dating in February, 2010. It worked.



Together ever since. Photo at left is them entering their reception, after getting married at Hoosier Grove Barn in Streamwood

The third member of their family is Remi, Brindle-Pittie mix. Their family does have members come and go, as they enjoy fostering Pitties and Labrador Retrievers.



Nichole has been around. Don't take that the wrong way. She grew up in Romeoville, IL. She spent her high school freshman year in Texas but moved right back to Romeoville. Of course, she lived in DeKalb for college. Then in June of 2017 she and Kevin moved to Mt Prospect. Since St Patty's Day 2022, they've been right here in Palatine.

As for activities, Nichole joined the competitive Women's Central Hockey League in 2014. She rose to her current status of Captain of her team, the Northwest Bandits. She's also the South Representative of the WCHL. Last year she was her team's leading scorer and in the top 25 for the whole league.



CAPTAIN
NICHOLE
GREENING

POSITION: DEFENSE/FWD

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN PLAYING? 10 YEARS

FAVORITE THING TO DO OUTSIDE OF HOCKEY? TRAVELLING AND CRAFTING

FAVORITE SONG: MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY HOLIDAYS

88

NORTHWEST BANDITS

which has 40 organizations spread over six states. Before a Hawks game, her Puicks for Autism



team got to play on the ice, and, because she'd done done a tv interview with Jon Hansen who announced the Hawks games, she was invited to try the half rink shot at a shrunken goal. Teammates had to individually fundraise to participate.

Outdoor loved pursuits include hiking, rollerblading, paddleboating, basically anything with water, knife throwing (one of their first dates in DeKalb), and disc golf. Nichole placed 1st in women's division on New Years Day in

**HOWIES
ATHLETIC TRAINER
OF THE MONTH**



“ ”

"I LOVE BEING AN ATHLETIC TRAINER BECAUSE IT ALLOWS ME TO COMBINE MY PASSION FOR SPORTS, HEALTH, AND HELPING OTHERS. EVERY DAY, I GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT ATHLETES IN REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL— IT'S INCREDIBLY REWARDING TO SEE SOMEONE I'VE WORKED WITH RETURN TO THE GAME STRONGER AND MORE CONFIDENT. BEING AN ATHLETIC TRAINER MEANS I'M NOT JUST PART OF THE SPORT BUT PART OF EACH ATHLETE'S JOURNEY."

NICHOLE GREENING
PALATINE HIGH SCHOOL

a Georgia tournament.

Indoor activities include crafting with her circuit and going to the gym with Kevin. Well, there's also that pickleball thing.



Another award Nichole has earned is the Palatine High School's November, 2025 Athletic Trainer of the Month.

Pickleball entered her life in March, 2025. That's when work friend Tom Sparks told her about the Palatine Picklers and their wonderful, free mentoring program. Now asked what she likes



about the Palatine Pickleball Club, she doesn't have to think about it. She loves the welcoming and friendly atmosphere and how it's a place where everyone, from beginners to seasoned players, feel included. She loves the constant encouragement from other Picklers and, of course, the friends she's made both on and off the courts. She really appreciates how organized everything is when we have mentoring, intramurals, and fun tournaments on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Canlan Sportsplex in Lake Barrington. She especially loves the fun tournaments.

Nichole and Tom Sparks finished 3rd in the Northbrook Park District Intermediate tournament.

Things Nichole has already checked off here Bucket List include skydiving, traveling to Costa Rica (white water rafting and ziplining in the rain forest) ... toured the Swiss Alps – Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and England ... Visiting Australia and New Zealand (she was an Ambassador for the USA in high school) ... She walked the Sydney Bridge, toured the Sydney Opera House, held a Koala Bear, and rock propelled in New Zealand.

Still awaiting to be checked off that Bucket List Travel – Alaska ... Ireland ... Banff National Park ... tour more of Italy ... See Northern Lights ... See a concert in the Red Rocks (CO) ... Experience a concert in the Caravans (TN) ... Disc Golf in all 50 states (32 down and only 18 to go).

OTHER THINGS FROM NICHOLE

Recently, she set the Mentoree Record for consecutive edge of paddle bounces of a pickleball. Two others at mentoring witnessed her 88 bounces. It is her goal to get to 100 before the end of the year. The mentoree record started the season at 44. Table Tennis Bill and Nichole have been going back and forth. Bill is still at 70. Is the club record in jeopardy? Hardly. Years ago Jonny Storm (Action shot Editor) send a video of his 192.

She LOVES Christmas and birthdays

She's had multiple knee injuries, but remains active, despite 2 ACL surgeries, 3 meniscus surgeries, and her current 2 years playing with a torn ACL. That's why she wears a knee brace.

That's all her left knee. Her right has an ACL problem and Meniscus tear.

She's a huge Harry Potter fan. Sadly, she's a lifelong Slytherin fan. At left she's by the patronus at the start of the

walk-through HP Forest in Gurnee.

As a 7-10 year old, she was a figure skater, winning an occasional medal or trophy. She didn't transition to hockey, but a few years later picked up the sport of which she, and

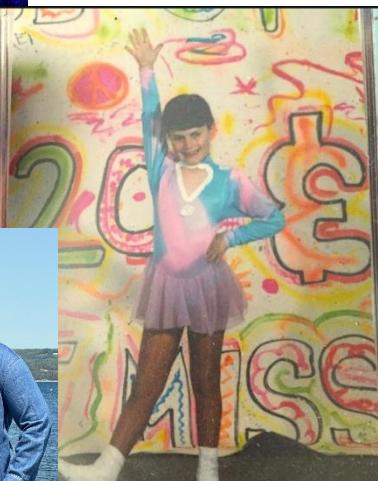
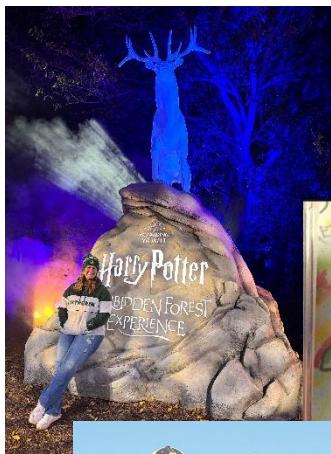
her family, was a fan.



Last but not least, she loves sampling different ciders, as at right.



Now for a bunch of more photos with explanations. At left with Kevin in Petoskey, MI.





Nichole supports Stonehenge in
in England



Mom & Step Dad last summer
just before Mom had a
transplant for cancer treatment



Enjoying Santa's chair at
Christmas Theme
Restuarant in Chicaco



Watching Nichole score and her
team win 8-0 and then celebrating
in the lounge were Bear, Natalie,
(Nichoe), and Judy.

**WASN'T THIS FUN? I'D LOVE TO
CREATE A PROFILE FOR YOU TOO.
Just email me at
aokbarry@yahoo.com. I'll sent you
my Profile Prompter from which I
can create your profile.**

REMEMBER TO CHECK OUR DI\$COUNT\$

5% OFF anything sold on PickleballCentral.com, when you use the code CRPALATINEPB.

10-20% OFF Paddletek paddles from Chuck at 847-877-7770 or grtfuldad@aol.com.

20% OFF EngagePickleball - Use discount code 20Jon

Selkirk discount code is Adv-JBradford

25% OFF anything from Gammasports.com, with the code ba_soderborg25

\$10 OFF Vatic Pro paddles ... https://vaticpro.com?sca_ref=3606076.ir5retg8qU Use code CHICAGO

15% OFF anything in Badminton Warehouse in Schaumburg, by mentioning Palatine Picklers

10% OFF anything purchased at Strings Attached IN Arlington Heights, when you mention Palatine Picklers. You can demo their paddles too.

PICKLERS' HOLIDAY LUNCHEON WAS PIZZARIFFIC

Clay and Chris Farnsworth orchestrated another holiday celebration for 80 Palatine Picklers on Thursday, December 11th. This year it was held in the Buffalo Grove Lou Malnatti's Restaurant. We had lots of pizza, pop, cake, and some other stuff. There was lots of music, starting with Clay's great rendition of Elvis's Blue Christmas. Eventually we all sang along with a bunch of Christmasy songs and then tv show theme songs. Words to all were passed out in advance. Some near to me said, "Well, I'm not going to sing." Wrong. Everyone sang. Fun.





Jeff Degner recited his Christmas,
pickleball poem



Ann Buras joined Clay for a duet. They even added
a little choreography



One of our delicious cakes



Gerd won the 50-50 \$800 raffle. He immediately donated his \$400 to Feed My Starving Children, to go with the other \$400.

Clay and Chris didn't pull this off alone. They had a bunch of volunteers to help make this the fun event it was. That bunch included Jaime Sandoval, Debbie Sutton, Bill & Jenny Buesing, Bill & Janet Parry, Janice Orlowski, Marcia & Jesse Cohen, and Ann Buras. Thanks, Everyone.

SPEAKING OF “FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN,” WE’RE GOING BACK JANUARY 8TH

For many years the Palatine Picklers have spent a little time helping this great cause. They are located at 740 Wiley Farm Ct in Schaumburg. Maureen Green has reserved 2:30 to 4:00 on Thursday, January 8th for us. If you'd like to participate, just email Maureen at MaureenTGreene@gmail.com.

TO WHOM DO WE SEND OUR DESIRES AND STUFF ?

Walkers ... Send your steps and head shot to Natalie Silverman at NVictoria527@gmail.com. *

Intramurals ... Send available dates to Chrissie Looper at TonyandChrissie@earthlink.net. *

Medalists ... Send your names, tournament, division, & medal to Stephanie Douglas at Stephanie.Douglas@sbcglobal.net, along with the photo of you with your medal. *

Mentorees ... Send your available dates to Bear at aokbarry@yahoo.com.

***BUT WAIT ... PLEASE COPY ME (aokbarry@yahoo.com) ON ANYTHING SENT TO NATALIE, CHRISSIE, OR STEPHANIE.** There will be times, such as for this issue, I need to step in and do the pages for someone, for one reason or another.

JONNY STORM HAS A GREAT, NEW JOB ... GM AT AURORA PICKLEBALL KINGDOM



Jonny Storm has been writing creative names on our newsletters' action photos for a few years now. He also has our club's "edge bouncing" record with videotapes 192 consecutive bounces of a pickleball on the edge of his paddle. He's also a 5.5+ DUPR rated player/coach and Pickleball Tournament Director.

He recently accepted the position of GM of the North Aurora Pickleball Kingdom at 1700 Orchard Gateway Blvd in North Aurora.

Congratulations, Jonny.

LET'S MEET SOME NEWBIES

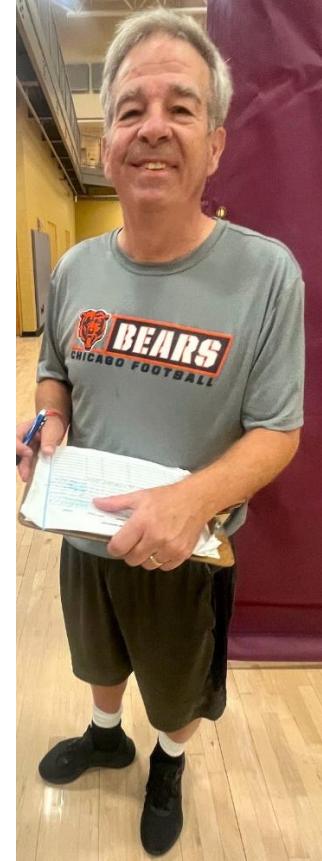
Of course, these are just the ones I have met in person. Many more have joined online. I know we'll all make these Newbies feel welcome and at home.



Ami



Beth



Bob



Brad



Dave



Jeff



Ken



Mia



Nancy



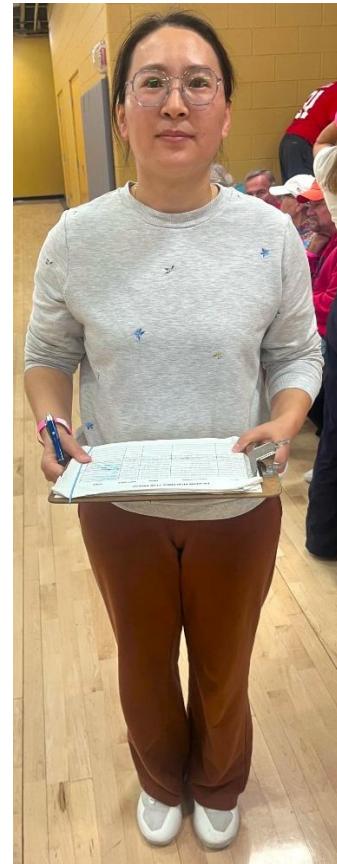
Rob



Sue



Wenna



Xiaolei

POST-DEADLINE NEWBIES (Didn't want them to wait)



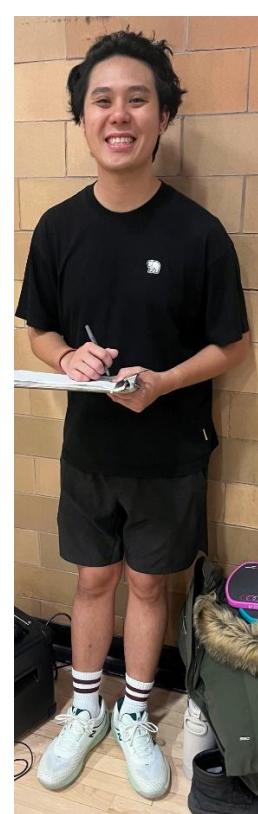
Ami



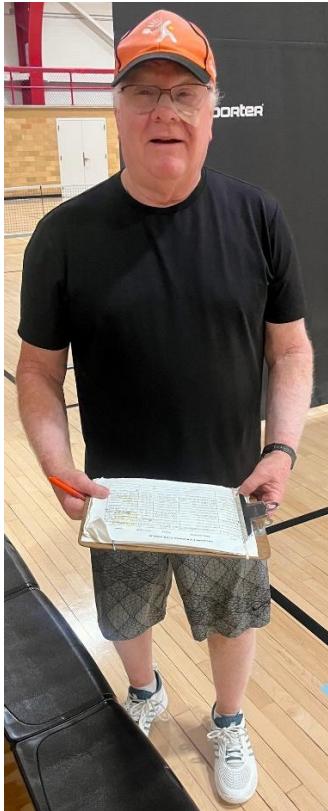
Anthony



Bianca



Bink



Dan



Doreen



Hayden



Janna



Jay

NOW SOME PICKLERS AT PLAY



Ann



Bill



Bob



Bob



Carol



Chris



Chrissie



Cindy



Dave



Deb





Leslie



Lyn



Mark



Mary



Natalie



Oliver



Phil



Ron



Rune



Scott



Tina

PARK DISTRICT'S PADDLE BATTLE FOR MIXED COUPLES

Palatine Picklers were well represented in the first, annual Paddle Battle. In no particular order they were Bianca Zavala (twice, once with non-member Mike Amofa & once with Bink Nguyen), Ami LeFevre & Brad Voehringer, Leslie Pontello & Bill Shehadeh, Josie & Don Prochilo, Stephanie Douglas & Larry Perlman, *Marsha Buvary* & Manesh Nallavalli, *Michelle Cohen* & Jose Sosa, Kate & Kent Kleiva, Judy Krakowiak, Mary Karson & Joe Mazzocchi, Karen Bryk & Jim Farina, Susan Mitsunaga & Jeff Greenberg, and Chris Vaia & Scott Brown.

Thanks to Scott for sharing these photos of the day's games.



Chris & Scott



Larry & Stephanie



Susan & Jeff



Bear



Judy



Chris & Scott again



Susan



Bear & Judy, bronze medalists

Brad & Ami captured 2nd in one Intermediate division. Kate & Kent took 3rd in another Intermediate division. Bear & Judy earned 3rd in the Beginners division.

SIGN UP FOR THE COUPLES **RED & PINK** TOURNAMENT

This year our annual Valentine's Red & Pink tournament will be Thursday, February 12th. It will start at 9:00 in Canlan in Lake Barrington. If you're a couple, one of you must wear red, while your partner wears pink. You do not have to be married or even SOs. Find a compatible partner (no restrictions) and sign up. Just e-mail Bob McGowan at BobMcgowan1946@gmail.com to register.

OUR MONTHLY CELEBRATION OF LOVERS OF WALKING

SUPER STEPPERS (at least 20,000 steps in one day)



23,608
Steps

Natalie Silverman



21,271 steps

Scot Shatwell



21,117

Pam Tallarito

WORTHY WALKERS (at least 15,000 steps in one day)

18,224



Natalie Silverman

15,591 steps



Bear Shatwell

Joining us here is easy. Your phone probably has a red heart “Health” icon. That’s where you’ll find your daily steps – or on a smart watch or Fitbit. Send Natalie your screen shot at NVictoria527@gmail.com, along with a head shot of yourself. It’s that easy.

INTERMEDIATE TOURNAMENT SATURDAY JANUARY 24TH

Our Mentor John Stepal is running an intermediate level (3.0 - 3.9) tournament at The ARC in Arlington Heights from 9:00 to 1:00. If it doesn’t fill completely, he’ll accept 2.8 level players. Registration is \$40 for Arlington Heights Park District residents and \$50 for everyone else. You don’t need a partner. You can register and pay at ARC, 600 Ridge Avenue in AH or call the AHPD at 847-577-3000 or John Stepal at 847-791-6813 for details. Several Palatine Picklers have already registered.

FEW BUT IMPORTANT MEDALISTS THIS MONTH



Rick Johnson & Eric Hurst
U.S. Sr Natl Championship, Ft Lauderdale PB Tournament
Holly Hill, FL – 70-74 4.0 - Silver



Ray Jenkins & Norm Dickman
75-79 4.0 - Silver



Doug Johnson & Rick Liston
U.S. Sr Natl Championship, 70-74 3.5 – Gold

HAVE A PICKLERIFFIC NEW YEAR

We've just ended a great 2025 (referring to only the Palatine Pickleball Club). We welcomed 448 new members and mentored 89 members at Sycamore over the summer and also 89 indoors at Canlan. We have lobbied well (more than 100 emails to the Park District Executive Director) for the 8 acres of PPD property at 68 & 14 have some form of pickleball (a lot of outdoor courts, a combination of outdoor and indoor, pickleball & an indoor pool, etc.) In 2025 I held 25 fun tournaments of which 7 were first timers (Aging Leprechauns, Long Last

Name, Pickler 15 minute games for 32 of us, Closest to July 4th birthday, Most Grandkids, Retail Workers, and table tennis).

As this month's closing photo suggests, we are flying into the new year with smiles. By the way, I found indoor skydiving much harder than actual skydiving, but still a lot of fun.

For whatever reason/s participation in our mentoring, intramurals, and even tournaments was lower than it had been in a decade. Please send your expected available for these events to the event managers AND me. Thanks. Happy New Year, Picklers.



Bear Shatwell
PickersPrez
aokbarry@yahoo.com