



PalatinePicklers.com

FEBRUARY, 2026 NEWSLETTER

HAPPY 11TH ANNIVERSARY, PICKLERS

It's time for my long rehash of our history. Feel free to skip the next few pages. Our Park District knew of my being an over-the-top administrator and coach in both youth hockey and boys baseball. I took up pickleball in January of 2015. One month later, they asked me to start a Palatine pickleball club. Within a week I'd recruited a couple dozen Falcon players and a temporary Board of six, and hand-drawn the logo you see above. Then I wrote my first, monthly newsletter. Since then we've seen this logo atop 121 newsletters, on 850 shirts, numerous car windows, and many patches/luggage tags.



I lobbied for pickleball lines to be added to tennis courts at Sycamore and Locust. In



spring of 2016, I asked Neal Harris to help me start a mentoring program at Sycamore for newbies. (at right) That program grew from Wednesday mornings with everyone welcome and counting off 1-2-3-1-2-3 for court assignments to inviting only 24, 12 for each 90-minute session with each of three Mentors and courts shared with three others of similar experience and ability.

Skipping through lobbying for real pickleball courts (2 at Sycamore and 2 at Locust, plus a multi-use tennis court at each, the big push was for a "real" pickleball facility which resulted in Hamilton. Loved their response – six of the best courts in the suburbs, complete with my requested 3rd color for kitchens. In 2019 I staged a 2-day Grand Opening, complete with donuts and free Crown Royal bags.

At right you see me enjoying the honor of the first serve on a Hamilton court. Next you'll see most of the Palatine Picklers who attended each of the Grand Opening sessions.



Now on to team competitions. I recruited our first travel team to compete with Hoffman Estates who trounced us, Libertyville who we trounced, and Barrington who we beat.

Then I was one of the founders of the four club Sub-4.0 competition. You'll see the teams



below. Libertyville and Park Ridge combined to make a full team. We Captains had to cede each player for gender and mixed games so we competed at, supposedly, the same level.



Barrington's 2017 Team



DuPage's 2017 Team



LibertyRidge's 2017 Team



Palatine's 2017 Team

This worked wonderfully for a while. Then each of the other teams began asking me to loan then a player or three. I remember one time it took me 53 phone calls to fill another team's roster. It became less fun. When half the players on four teams were Palatine Picklers, it was time to abolish this league. That was followed by Palatine vs MidTown and Palatine vs Barrington intermediate competitions. Again, I had to loan Picklers and, again, ringers became common. That's when I started our 3.0-3.5 intermediate intramural program which has been enjoyed by more than 100 men and women so far.

Back to mentoring. A couple years later I added walk-on mentoring sessions (no invitation needed) from 3 to 5 each Thursday at Hamilton. In another couple years, I added Saturday afternoon sessions, to accommodate those who couldn't attend either Wednesday or Thursday sessions due to work, golf, babysitting, etc. Hundreds of Picklers have taken advantage of these sessions at Hamilton. I assign courts based on my estimate of ability, and, occasionally, swap a couple Picklers.

We currently have 4,650 members. For those of you who enjoy numbers as much as I, prior to this one, my newsletters have contained 2,466 pages and 20,147 photos, most of which I've taken. They've also given you "up close and personal" looks at 65 of your fellow members through Personal Profiles. I've enjoyed introducing you to these Picklers you knew on the court but never really knew.

We've enjoyed policies that have made our pickleball experience more fun for everyone. The most significant is our paddle up for your next game. I hired Jim Blair to make the PVC tubes we use at Hamilton. Unless you really want to play with your own foursome, everyone plays with a different foursome each game, and everyone gets equal playing time. When numbers justify, we separate competitive from rec players, again increasing our enjoyment. Early in our Falcon days, I initiated the "glare court" policy of changing sides to evenly divide the time either team spends looking into the glare of the lobby. We enforced a number of COVID time policies ... touching only your own ball... being masked ... not entering kitchen to say "Good game" ... not bunching up at paddle racks ... and raising net so balls could be putted back to their owners. Serving as the Pickleball Police, I have had pairs playing singles paddle up to play with us in doubles. I've kept the number of courts for competitive and rec in line with the numbers of Picklers racking up in each cage at Hamilton. I've emailed individual Picklers, when their on-court behavior has not aligned with our policy of good sportsmanship. And I'm often called upon to settle a rules dispute. It comes with the job. This is the job I do not expect to have in 2027, but I'll leave you in good hands.

We've enjoyed 56 fun & creative tournaments over the years. We've twice been written up in national magazines. In my January newsletter I gave this link <https://pickleballclubmag.com/2025/12/04/the-nov-dec-2025-issue-is-here/> to a great article about our club that just appeared on page 30 of Pickleball Club Magazine. They think we've done a lot right, for the good of the club and the sport.

It's really common for one or more of our members to play in another state and run into another Palatine Pickler or two. This has happened in Arizona, Florida, Utah, California, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, that I remember. My most unbelievable coincidence happened almost two years ago in Disney World. I was wearing one of my bright Palatine Picklers shirts. Kathy and I were standing next to another couple. The lady did a double take at my shirt and then asked, "Oh my God. Palatine Picklers. Do you know Bear?" I was dumbfounded. Turns out she's good friends with our Mentor Marv who had spoken to her of our club and me. Really? We're in FL.

We appear on four bricks around the original courts on Bambridge Island in Washington.



Here's a quick summary of other things we've experienced. We honor our medalists and our walkers monthly. We've helped get charity tournaments started for Arlington Senior Center, My Density Matterd, and Journeys. We've held two summer long skinny singles ladders. We've enjoyed movie and song trivia contests. 20 of us spent a pickleball week in Jamaica with daily tournaments and clinics by a Hall of Famer. We held the Tucky Tounament to raise more than \$1200 for the favorite charity of a Lady Pickler who had passed.

We have an annual **Photo Day**.





We've held two table tennis tournaments. We've had fitness workshops at Rush Physical Therapy. We've had two, summer long Skinny Singles ladders. We've honored Picklers with the most pickleball shirts. We built a pickleball scarecrow to compete in Palatine's annual contest. The Park District had me do a podcast on pickleball and our club. We've had 10 volunteers each year enjoy the PPD's Volunteer Recognition Luncheon and honored one special volunteer each year.

Now we've been lobbying for a lot more courts at the corner of 14 and 68. The jury is still out, but we're optimistic. It's come down to being between pickleball for us with 1470 Park District members or a new home for horses. I'm sure it hasn't gone unnoticed that Palatine has fewer outdoor courts per capita than any of our 17 nearest neighboring towns. We've also begun to lobby for increased lighting at Community Center which currently stands 30% below the recommended minimum illumination for pickleball.

With all we've accomplished in our first 11 years, can you imagine what my replacement will be writing in another 11 years. No, I'm not going anywhere quite yet, and I do like the help I'm receiving from Chrissie Looper on intramurals, Natalie Silverman on Walkers, Stephanie Douglas on medalists, Nichole Greening on social media, Linda O'Connor on shirts, and Bob McGowan on fun tournaments. However, by the end of this year, I'd like soon to step away from everything but membership management, including welcoming Newbies and management of Summer Wednesdays and Indoor Tuesdays mentoring. Well, and semi-annual Mentoree Tournaments. I'll just enjoy playing every day (should be running again for first time in years by June) and loving what Pickler peers are doing to keep the club so vibrant.

PLEASE let me know if you'd like to become the next Picklers' PooBah. I'm at aokbarry@yahoo.com. Just FYI I do have an individual in mind to replace me. He learned about this a couple weeks ago and is considering it. However, I'm open to other candidates.

I'd like to thank MOST of the Picklers with whom I've shared a court since COVID for their patience. A fall would almost certainly take my 8th and final sport off my table. I did get admonished at Birchwood two weeks ago for not taking a step to my left to get a ball hit down the middle, even though it should have been my right-handed partner's ball. Most have been

more tolerant, and I appreciate it. With a new knee, I hope to elevate my current sub 2.0 rating to at least 3.0 by June. (When playing pre-COVID tournaments, I was a 3.4 for mens and a 3.5 for mixed.) A subsequent injury to my right shoulder screws up forehand accuracy so I'll never get fully back, but, with mobility, I hope to cease being an embarrassment on the court.

ANNUAL RED & PINK VALENTINES COUPLES TOURNAMENT

This has been an annual fun one for several years. Couples do not have to be true couples. Just two Picklers with one wearing red and the other pink. Bob, Fun Tournament Manager, can accept three more couples. It's Thursday, February 12th, from 9:00 to Noon in Canlan. Find a partner and email Bob at BobMcGowan1946@gmail.com AND me at aokbarry@yahoo.com.

CHANGED GAME PLAN ... EMAIL ME, NOT EVENT MANAGERS

Picklers who win medals and all who walk at least 15,000 steps in a day should email me with your info and photos. I will keep it on file and get the info to Stephanie Douglas and Natalie Silverman for them to prepare the newsletter pages. Intramural wannabes should email Chrissie Looper at TonyandChrissie@earthlink.net, and for our fun tournaments, email Bob at BobMcGowan1946@gmail.com.

WEARING OF THE GREEN TOURNAMENT

To celebrate St Patrick's Day, we'll welcome every Pickler wearing bright green to compete in this March 12th tournament (9:00-12:00 in Canlan). Just be among the first 12 to respond to Bob McGowan at BobMcGowan1946@gmail.com. Then maybe lunch n a green environment.



Kathy



Leslie



Nichole



Ron



Oliver



. Scott



Mary



Tom



Tammy



Tommy

YES! IT'S TIME FOR OUR UNTALL LADIES

This is one of our most popular, annual tournaments, It's for all our Lady Picklers who haven't grown beyond 5'2". We usually limit it to 12, but we'll expand to 16, if enough of you want to contend as petite Picklers. It's Thursday, March 19th in Canlan from 9:00 to Noon. Just email Bob at BobMcGowan1946@gmail.com to register.

OUR OLDIES HAD A GOOD OLD TIME

The last two years we had simultaneous tournaments for the 12 oldest Pickler men and 12 oldest Pickler women. As with so many events of the last year, finding participants was a challenge. Bob eventually was able to put together a single tournament for 10 "old" men and two "old" women. Though smaller than usual, it was just as much fun as ever.



Bob, Terry, Steve, Kathy, Mark, Kent, Pam, Dale, Dave,
 . Frank, & Bea. John was our photographer.



Steve on our right won, while Mark,
 Frank, & John tied for 2nd.

INTERMEDIATE PICKLERS – LET CHRISSIE HEAR FROM YOU

50% of our thousands of members are appropriate for our Intermediate Intramural matches. Rosters change each match. Email Chrissie at TonyandChrissie@earthlink.net with the dates you expect to be available. (2/3, 2/17, 3/3, 3/17, 3/31, 4/14, 4/28, etc.) She'll send invitations on the Sunday before each match.

A REWARDING “FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN” DAY

Our Palatine Picklers have headed to Schaumburg once or twice a year for most of our existence. We had a smaller than usual group this time, but it was enjoyed by all who were able to participate. Thanks to Maureen Greene for coordinating our afternoon again.



Boxes: 44
Meals: 9,504
Kids fed a daily meal for a year: 26
Cost: 2,756

Non-Pickler, John, Maureen, Jim, Jerry, Judy, Rune, Linda, Janice, Barb, Chris, & Clay. Phil missed the photo op.

MEXICO WEEK WAS ENJOYED BY A DOZEN PICKLERS

After having 20 sign up for the Jamaica week a couple years ago, I'd expected 30+ to sign up for the much nearer Mexican pickleball week. But, like most things this last year, participation fell well short of expectations. Those who opted for this pickleball resort week had a great time and loved their environment.

Most played pickleball every day and enjoyed restaurants both in the resort and around town. The courts and views were terrific.



. Michael, Cindy, Nancy, Joanie, Judy, Linda, Tina, John M, Jill, Gerd. Missing: John & Jeanne S

HOW 'BOUT NEXT YEAR

THIS is the time we should be thinking of doing a week next January. If you're interested in joining this fun, email me at aokbarry@yahoo.com. I think we can break the record of 20 who signed up for Jamaica. Let's make it happen.



tranquility



feathered friends



wild animal risk



Sunrise



Sunset



Nancy, Linda, Judy, & Joanie enjoyed the ATV of John S's friends



Tina, John M, Michael, Cindy, Gerd, Linda, Jill, Joanie, Nancy, John S, & Judy



MASATO'S D&J BISTRO IS CLOSING 2/14

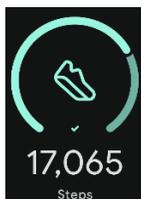


Perhaps not all of you are familiar with this fantastic restaurant in Lake Zurich, but it's been around 37 years. It's closing 2/14. Our own Masato Suzuki started as the chef and soon became the owner. A great many Picklers have frequented D&J. Masato has played in our Chicago Metro league and won several medals in Midwest tournaments. He's also a Mentor, though not for us. Kathy and I enjoyed our final dinner there last week, and Masato joined us for a 20-minute visit. In an earlier newsletter, he was featured as our Ninja Pickler. Please try to get reservations, before this institution is gone forever.

APPARENTLY, WE DIDN'T WALK MUCH IN JANUARY

Like so many things in the last year, participation in our walker-honoring section of the newsletter has fallen to a new low. Hope next month we can show you more than Ever-walking Natalie and me. Email me at aokbarry@yahoo.com, if you walk more than 15,000 steps in a day. Also, please include a head shot of yourself.

WORTHY WALKERS (15k+)



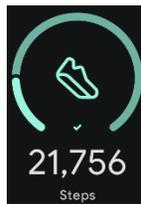
Natalie Silverman



15,591 steps

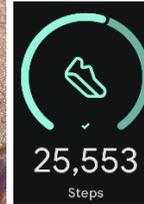
Bear Shatwell

SUPER STEPPER (20k+)



Natalie Silverman

ULTRA WALKER (25k+)



Natalie Silverman

THIS MONTH'S MEDALISTS



M Ann Fish & Joyce Pihl
USAPA Tournament
Surprise, AZ - 4.5 - Bronze



John Pugsley & John Pihl
Golden Ticket Qualifier for Nationals -
Glendale, AZ - 80+ - Silver



Jeff Greenberg (1st) and Lisa Wollersheim (2nd)
ARC, Arlington Heights – Intermediate

IF YOU WIN A MEDAL IN A TOURNAMENT, email me the tournament, your division, your partner's name if doubles, and which medal you won ... and a photo of the two of you. S@nd this to me at aokbarry@yahoo.com.

3 PALATINE PICKLERS MADE IT INTO A CATALOG



Mark, Jim, and Annette were the first players to initiate the new Salt Creek courts. They were enshrined in the Park District's spring catalog. We always love such publicity.

Way to be in the right place at the right time, Picklers.

WHAT PICKLEBALL MEANS TO SO MANY

Jeff Degner shared this piece of unknowns origin, but it's virtually perfect. Enjoy.

When we were kids, play was our natural state. We ran,climbed,chased,giggled,scraped our knees,and waited for the streetlights to come on or begged for five more minutes before coming inside. Then life happened. We grew up,got degrees,got jobs,got mortgages,got responsible.

But then along came Pickleball. And suddenly we're playing again. It's movement ,connection,and challenge all wrapped up in laughter in plastic wiffle -ball chaos. We want to feel seen,valued,and part of something bigger than ourselves. It's a social ecosystem where strangers become partners,partners become friends, and friends become family . Pickleball has brought every cross- section of life onto the same court! White collar meets blue collar. Republican dinks with Democrat. Gay,straight, young, old, retired, still figuring it out ,everyone is welcome. It's brought every cross- section of life onto the same court!

Pickleball has added a vertical axis to that social map, bridging generations, professions and perspectives in a way no other sport truly has. As adults our social circles tend to get smaller. Pickleball has flipped the script! We meet new people ,laughing with strangers, finding our tribe. How many people in your phone now have "Pickleball" as their first or last name? Exactly !

Pickleball didn't just bring us a new sport, it gave us permission to play again. To show up with an agenda. To laugh until our cheeks hurt. To remember that the best parts of life don't

happen in boardrooms or inboxes. They happen on courts surrounded by people who now feel like family. And that, my friends, is why we're all beautifully, unapologetically addicted.

There would be a lot more joy in the world if more people played Pickleball. Amen.

TALK ABOUT HOB NOBBING



Once Jese and Marcia Cohen split with Chris and Clay Farnsworth in Palm Springs & Palm Desert they volunteered at the Carvana PB Tournament in Rancho Mirage, CA. They were courtside ticket monitors which means they checked wristbands and turned away anyone with the wrong color. They got a chance to see Ben Johns and Anna Leigh Waters play up close. Jesse got a chance to speak with Ben, after the match. He sends his regards to the Palatine Picklers. Jesse and Marcia hope to work this tournament again next year.



Fred



Dean



John



Karen



Cindy



Cindy



Marv



Kent

OUR 2ND PICKLR TOURNAMENT

32 of us had a great morning a few months ago. We had a 2-hour tournament. We're doing it again. This is a gift to our Palatine Picklers from Mt Prospect Picklr. On Thursday, March 19th get to Pickler, 211 W Rand Rd, Mt Prospect by 9:45 to pay their special \$20 fee. We'll play 8 games from 10 to Noon. Every 15 minutes I'll blow a whistle. No end of games. At that moment everyone will write their score on their own clipboard (yes, 32 clipboards). Winners will move to the next higher number court, and losers will move to the next lower number court. This is an awesome facility with great courts. Again, I'm limiting this to the first 32 Picklers who want to have a great morning. Then we'll again go to lunch at Jameson Charhouse on Dundee, just east of 53. Hope you'll be in the first 32 to email me at aokbarry@yahoo.com to register for this fun tournament.



Chris



Bob



Chris



Chrissie

REMEMBER TO CHECK OUR DISCOUNTS

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.



Cathy



Bill



Barb



Sheila

MT PROSPECT PICKLR LOWERS OPEN PLAY FEES

If you're tired of wood floors with too many lines of too many colors, here's a great option for you. Many of you are members already, and 32 of us saw just what an amazing club this Picklr is. They've replaced their \$30 flat fee with 2-hour rates for non-members as low as \$5 an hour.

Picklrs are individually owned so are not all alike. Here's what you may want to know about the Mt Prospect Picklr.

Pricing: *(See attached for specific peak/off-peak hours)*

Off-Peak: \$10 (Only \$5/hour!)

Peak: \$20

Members: Always FREE

Why The Picklr Mount Prospect is the Premier Choice:

14 Pro-Grade Courts: Including 2 Championship courts and 2 dedicated dink courts.

The Most Open Play Options Around: Open play runs all day from 6 AM to 11 PM and they typically dedicate a minimum of 6 courts to open play, expanding up to 14 courts during peak times. Best of all, **all sessions are divided by skill level**, ensuring competitive games regardless of your skill level.

Pro-Level Environment: Every court features professional grade surfacing, permanent nets, and full fencing. Enjoy pro-grade lighting, sound baffles that reduce noise by 47%, and zero "multi-sport" lines.

Luxury Amenities: Upscale locker rooms, private showers/changing rooms, a premium lounge with free Starbucks or Dunkin coffee and popcorn, and ample high-top seating. They also offer a workout area (weights, bench, bike, yoga mats, etc.) and a large private event space.

Pro Shop & Refreshments: They also have a full Pro Shop which is the official 'brick and mortar' store for Pickleball Central where you can also get your Pickleball Central discounts there and you don't have to wait for shipping. In addition to a wide assortment of paddles,

they offer apparel and a host of other gear to meet all your needs. They also offer an assortment of alcoholic/non-alcoholic drinks and snacks that are available for purchase.

Booking is easy: You can call to reserve or book directly. All Open Play sessions are available to book up to 3 days in advance, and you can reserve as many sessions as you like.

How to Book:

Download **The Picklr App**, select Mount Prospect, and you're in! You can view all programming, check real-time availability, and see how many spots are remaining. You can also call the front desk at **847-716-2244** with any questions or for help booking your spot.

Want the full experience?

There are already a large number of Palatine Picklers that are members, so you'll likely see a bunch of familiar faces over there.

If you'd like to play more, they have a 15-Day Unlimited Trial for \$30. In addition to unlimited open play, you'll receive:

Private court reservations.

Access to all leagues and Picklr-hosted tournaments.

4 free guest passes and 4 free clinics per month with some of the top instructors in the State – each clinic is valued at \$40

As a trial member, you enjoy every benefit reserved for the full members at The Picklr Mount Prospect. This 15-day trial is a great way to see why they may be the premier club in the Chicagoland area.

Lastly, they also offer **FREE LEARN TO PLAY CLASSES FOR EVERYONE EVERY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY FROM 10AM to 11AM.** Space is limited so you need to call or text the front desk to reserve your spot. That number is **847-716-2244.**



Clay



Jim



Gary



Judy



Larry



Alice



John



Bill



Brian



Bob



Sheila



Bruce

MEET OUR NEWEST PALATINE PICKLERS



Aiko



Allen



Artie



Beth



Bryan



Dave



Ekta (Soni)



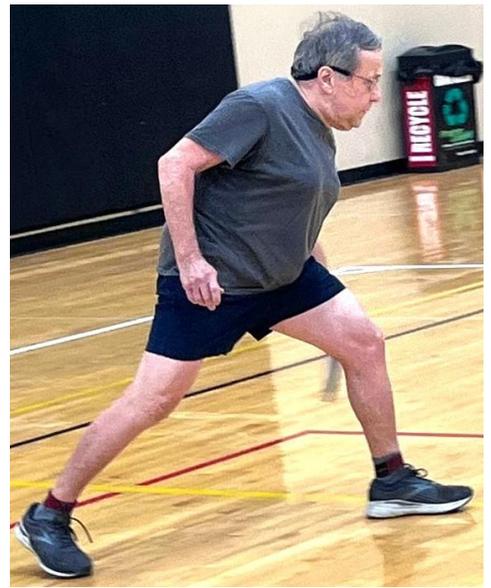
Jeff



Karen



Kathy



Ken



Lauri



Maria



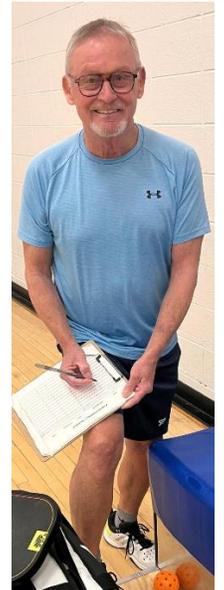
Marty



Nina



Paul



Rick



Towoko



Yuri

WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

Just for fun I browsed through a small portion of photos from long ago. I thought I'd share some of my favorites (chosen for a variety of reasons). Hope a few bring back memories for our more veteran Picklers. Most we see rarely, if at all now.



Al



Alberto



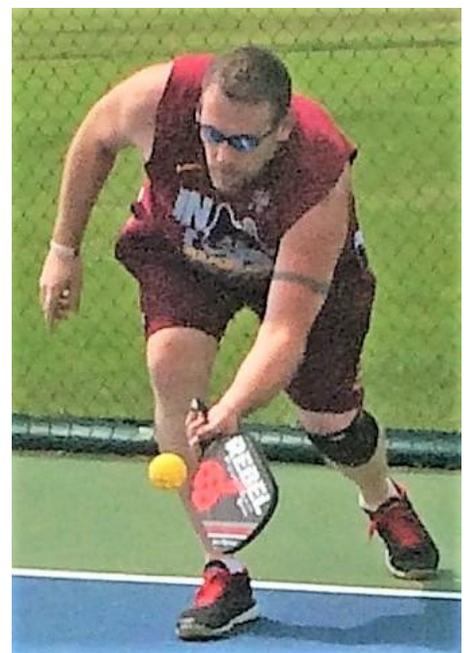
Brigitte



Chuck



Dana



Daniel



Dennis



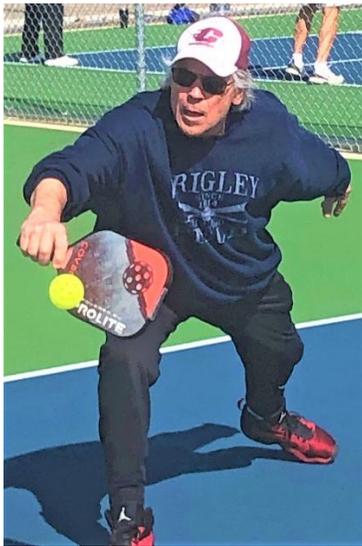
Don



Don



Donna



Frank



Franklin



Guiseppe



Heather



James



Jane



Jeff



John



Josh



Kathy



Kim



Leah



Linda



Liz



Lynne



Miles



Neal



Masato



Sebastian



Sue

HAPPY VALENTINES DAY & HAPPY PICKLING

With my getting less involved with walkers and medalists and now having virtually no involvement with intramurals and fun tournaments, I really need you all to support all these activities. If you're an intermediate Pickler, let Chrissie know the dates you expect to be available. If you qualify for any of Bob's unique tournament, let him know right away. I won't be taking pics for a while so may dig a few from my archives for the next couple newsletters.

Above all I want to thank my bride. Kathy has allowed me to spend way too many hours a week on the laptop. It's OK to play every day, but she deserves to see more of me at home. I Except for mentoring and maintaining the membership roster, I expect to be retired by the end of the year.

Happy picklknng.

Bear

PicklersPrez

aokbarry@yahoo.com

