***President’s Message January 2022***

***A satirical view of the upcoming calendar year from an Admirer of***

***Dave Barry; humor columnist and frequent writer of ‘Year in Review’***

**January The year kicked off with a re-make of the ‘Epstein Open’. It was held at the**

**Downtown Sports & Wellness club instead of Midtown *(Supreme Courts circa 1981).***

**The winners of each division selected either an Adriatic Cruise or a week stay at**

**the Betts Carlton VRBO in the Malibu hills of Los Angeles County, California.**

**February The Royal Spa and Court Club in Farmington re-opened its doors to the public. It is now**

**the premier athletic club in the Four Corners region. With eight courts that transition**

**from 40 feet to 32 feet in length, it can host racquetball, handball, squash, paddleball,**

**and squash 57. It has an outdoor pavilion area housing 6 tennis and 12 pickleball courts.**

**We anticipate it will host the 2023 Ralph Waddington New Mexico Games Court Festival.**

**May The International Racquetball Federation (IRF) has named Midtown Sports & Wellness the**

**host venue for the 2024 World Championships. This bi-annual event for the top players in the**

**world will be held in August. It is the first time since 1996 (Phoenix) that the US will be host.**

**A contingency for the agreement is that NMSW bulldoze its outdoor pool to construct two,**

***all glass stadium courts* with fixed seating for 400 spectators.**

**June The Reno Sports Connection, Wallyball pioneer Joe Garcia’s dream facility, finally opened after**

**four unsuccessful inaugurations. Back in 2007 Garcia and friends were ready to open this**

**public pay per play 19 court extravaganza. Significantly scaled down, the 2500 square foot**

**building has two concrete wall courts and no viewing area. Hourly rates are $25 per player.**

**July The NM State Singles & Doubles were combined into one tournament at month’s end. It was**

**held at the Artesia Fitness and Racquet Club; the first time this great event was held outside**

**of Albuquerque. Peyton Yates, who sold the club pre-Covid to a local gym owner, took over**

**ownership once again via default. He next infused $1 million into renovation and expansion;**

**including eight more championship courts, all with back glass. The draw made history, with**

**over 380 players participating from across New Mexico, Southern Colorado, and West Texas.**

**The previous record for numbers was 360, established in 1979 at Albuquerque’s Supreme Cts.**

**September Kane Waselenchuk, after receiving a waiver from Racquetball Canada, represented**

**Romania in the IRF World Championships, held in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. He teamed**

**with Mixed Doubles partner, Martina Navratilova, to win the ‘Open’ title over the**

**Mexican pair of Daniel and Michelle DelaRosa. They won the newly installed**

**Centurian Mixed division as well, besting the US pair of Michelle Gould and Michael Jordan.**

**October The US Open, after the retirement of Doug Ganim, was held in Las Vegas, Nevada; at the**

**renovated Sporting House. This iconic facility, which was transitioned into a brothel**

**over two decades ago, was sold to a conglomerate in 2020, just in time for a remodel;**

**back to a grand multi-purpose indoor court facility. The success of the event can be**

**attributed in large part to the LOC, led by former NM entrepreneur, Gavin Maloof.**

***Passing***

***Chuck Espinoza passed away on December 22nd at the age of 61, due to complications from Covid.***

***A fundraising campaign is in progress to assist the family. Contact Gary at*** [***gmampro@gmail.com***](mailto:gmampro@gmail.com)***.***

***Service is scheduled for Calvary Church; 4001 Osuna NE Albuquerque,***

***Thursday, January 20th @ 11am; to be followed by burial in La Manga, NM (near Las Vegas)***

***Quote of the month***

***‘A good times man like me ain’t got no business singing the blues’ Jim Croce***

**As we complete our 45th year in operation, we wish all a HAPPY & HEALTHY NEW YEAR,**

***Gary***

***NMRacquetball.com New Mexico Racquetball Facebook***