



### Letter from the Editor

Joanne Griesser

This is the second edition of the Howard County Pickle Ball Association (HCPA). Here are four commandments from Ron Elbe. They highlight that there are always 2 sides to every court!

#### The Four Commandments by: Ron Elbe

1. Minimize thy unforced errors.
2. Hurry thee to the non-volley zone.
3. Direct thy shots toward they opponent’s feet.
4. Play as a team with thy partner.

#### Your Opponents Commands

1. Give thy opponents lots of opportunities to make unforced errors.
2. Keep thy opponents back from the non-volley zone.
3. Force thy opponents to hit high shots.
4. Make it difficult for thy opponents to play as a team.

This Newsletter is for our members. If you have a story, a helpful tip, pictures, travel information, an event or you just want to have your voice heard, send your article to [Joanne.Griesser@verizon.net](mailto:Joanne.Griesser@verizon.net). Your input could appear in the next newsletter.

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**From the President’s Desk**

The weather is just not cooperating for us! First it was too much rain and now it’s too cold. Luckily, we are a hearty group and there are still many of us playing outside at the Owen Brown Tennis Club. We have also been lucky in that our association has convinced CA not to remove the nets. They have been very accommodating for us considering the tennis nets came down a while ago. However, it’s time to think about indoor venues. Our association is working on a couple of alternatives. Unfortunately, we had some early setbacks; our plans for use of Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Gyms got overturned by the basketball program and our plans to use the Howard Community College got derailed due to increased insurance requirements. However, we have come up with some alternatives. We are now using two HCPSS cafeterias, Bryant Woods Elementary School and Burleigh Manor Middle School to setup one court each for Monday and Thursday nights (6:30pm to 9:15pm) as well as the Lake Elkhorn gym and cafeteria for Saturday mornings (9am to 1pm). Luckily, we don’t have to pay for the facilities during the week but we do have to pay for a custodian on Saturday. Thus, we have established a \$10 fee per session to cover that cost. Use of all these facilities requires us to layout the court with tape and set up our nets which takes some volunteers at the beginning of each session. Overall, all those who have played at these facilities are quite satisfied. These venues will be available to us till the end of March. Doodle polls will be used for weekly registration. Please support the Saturday sessions; the more people we get to participate the easier it is to cover the cost for the facility.

We have been working with CA and the village boards to promote the idea of establishing more pickleball courts. This effort continues but one result is the proposed formation for a coalition committee made up of the five organizations that currently offer pickleball venues: CA, HC Recreation and Parks, Forest Hill Tennis Club, YMCA and the Board of Education. This idea was recommended by Ginny Thomas, the Oakland Mills CA representative and we are hoping this will move forward. We are asking members from each of the Columbia villages to email their CA representative asking them to support the formation of this coalition. Thanks to all who have already submitted their supporting emails. Hopefully, this will move forward, and we can participate in this effort to promote the development of more pickleball venues for both the short term and the long term.

The association will be offering the rental of the Pickleball Tutor device which shoots pickleballs for training purposes. You can check out its uses with YouTube. We are offering the battery-operated device which should run for 3 hours for \$30 a day. This device will be available sometime in March or April. In addition to the PB Tutor device we are offering to provide 40 ball, a ball retriever device, a

guide to its use with established drills and a carrying cart to transport it. We will be setting up a reservation system on the website soon.

Here's some additional association information. We have recruited Joe Beitz to be our tournament director for the coming year. Joe has done a great job in setting up several tournaments both at Locust Park and Owen Brown Tennis Club. We are in the planning stage right now so stay tuned for more information. The pickleball trip to Naples, scheduled for the end of Feb. and the beginning of March is on and several of our members will be attending. Finally, thanks also for your renewal participation and support for our association. The money we raise with the dues helps our association continue to offer a variety of playing opportunities and other capabilities.

### **Duane's Court**

If you haven't been following the Howard County Pickleball Association Facebook page (you can search for the page on Facebook and follow it) you may have missed some of posts that I have made on the mistakes that players should try to eliminate to play better. Here are some of the points:

- 1) Stop hitting balls that are going out. You should be aware of where you are on the court and the height and speed of the ball to judge if it is going out. Too often players feel they must hit every ball. Try letting more balls go by you and see how many go out. You might be surprised how many more points you can score on your opponents "out" balls.
- 2) Stop hitting into the net. This is one that trips most of us up the most. Why are we trying to hit "just" above the net or hitting a volley on a ball with a downward arch? Balls on a downward arch below the top of the net should be returned with a soft shot not a volley. Try giving yourself more margin for error on your return shots over the net. Even giving your opponents a shot they return for a possible winner is better than your hitting into the net.
- 3) Stop hitting out on the sides. Again this is something that you should give yourself more margin for error than trying for that tough angle shot winner. Try only returning balls in the middle half of each of the serving boxes and try to win more points down the middle than angle shots to the outside lines.
- 4) Finally and maybe most importantly try to only give your opponent's balls on a downward arch. Balls on a downward arch make it more likely that your opponents will hit into the net or hit long. If you hit balls on an upward arch you only set up your opponents to return smash shots.

### **Webmaster Tidbits**

I am always looking for ideas on how we can improve our website. Please let me know if something occurs to you. No guarantee I will be able to act on it right away, but it will be considered and acted upon if the board thinks it's worthwhile. I am also seeking someone to assist with the web site. If you have time and interest, please let me know. Please review our local places to play table and let me know if we are missing a location that is worth adding.

Earl

## Upcoming Events

Pickleball trip to Naples Florida is on for the end of Feb. and the beginning of March. Approximately 6 members will be joining Duane & Jan. Contact Duane if you would like information.

## Where to Play

With the winter season here, many of us are looking to find a nice cozy indoor facility. Currently these are the INDOOR places we have identified. <http://howardcountypickleball.org/places-to-play/local-places-to-play/>

As mentioned in the "From the Presidents Desk", we are using Howard County Public School System facilities for both weekday and weekend sessions. For weeknight sessions, since we can only setup one court per school, we are limiting the registration to 6 players which along with 2 volunteers makes up 8 players per night to allow for enough play time. Please limit your participation for weekday play to one night to permit other members the opportunity to play.

At this time, registration for Monday nights is not very high so if this continues we will likely drop Monday nights.

Remember should schools be closed due to bad weather, there will be no activities at the school for the day. When in doubt, check the Howard County Public School System website (<https://www.hcps.org/>) for confirmation.

Contact Earl ([sneeringere@gmail.com](mailto:sneeringere@gmail.com)) if you have any questions

## Social Events

Due to a lack of response the two proposed events, Main Event bowling outing and attending the Play "Gypsy" at Toby's Theater have been cancelled.

If you have any suggestions on what other social events you would like to participate in, please contact Ken Greco at 443-963-4140 or [kengreco@aol.com](mailto:kengreco@aol.com).

## Humor

Q. How many Pickle ball players does it take to change in a light bulb?

A. What do you mean the bulb was out?

## Travel Log

*With our members traveling and playing pickleball in various locations, here's an opportunity to share your pickleball related travel pictures and news.*

### Pickleball in Portugal by Earl Sneeringer

This past summer, Earl Sneeringer arranged for two pickleball nets to be setup at the Vale do Lobo Tennis Academy in the Algarve of Portugal during a week's vacation and destination wedding for his son. The Algarve is the southern region of Portugal known for its tropical resorts, much like the Caribbean. He contacted the tennis club and rented two courts for two hours each. They were willing to use painter's tape and lay out the lines for the courts and Earl brought tennis conversion kits for the nets as well as paddles and balls. There was a bit of a mix up, given that the measurements provided were in feet and inches rather than in metrics but that was resolved early during the setup. Earl's family and several of his son's in-laws from the UK played. It was a great time.



*Earl (in association shirt) playing with a good friend against his son and grandson.*



*Earl's two sons, their girlfriends and his grandson.*



*The group picture taken by Earl*

### Florida Travels by Duane & Jan Stclair

Only a few years ago it was a challenge to find pickleball courts when traveling around Florida. Now almost all cities in Florida have recognized that pickleball is an important factor in visitors coming to their city. We have all heard about the Villages with over 100 courts spread over their 8 villages. Players there line up at 8 am every day to play. The courts are shown below.



Naples has been the host of the US Pickleball Open for the past few years with their 58 courts. There are 6 different sections that allow players to play against players at their own level of play. Six of us from Howard County are going to be playing there in March. This is a Winter getaway that all of us should consider beating the cold and snow of our area.



For Jan and I Marathon Key has been our Winter getaway location for the past 6 years because of their active pickleball play. This year they have 6 new pickleball courts that have 25 to 30 players every day. They have bins for paddles for 4 levels of play.



Of course, Key West is the destination for many people visiting the Florida Keys. The good news is that Key West has 6 pickleball courts for play every day from November to March. These courts are right next to Higgs Beach which gives you the opportunity to swim or snorkel after playing there. You can usually count on some wind off the ocean at these courts.



These are just some of the courts we have played on. The East coast of Florida has many courts. Next year try to enjoy some Winter sun in the Sunshine State.

### **Travel Tips by Ken Greco**

For those who love to travel and combining travel and pickleball is a priority; players have many options. Local pickleball clubs websites have their local places to play and welcome newcomers. If you like to spend your vacation on cruise ships you have options also. Many new ships have sports courts that are set up for basketball or volleyball. Before you get on the ship contact the sports director for that particular ship and ask them if they can provide a tennis net you can use to play pickleball. If they do not allow tape to designate the lines a few small pylons that ball are used for other sports can be used in a pinch. Princess cruise lines is adding separate pickleball courts to some of their newer ships. I played on a Princess ship a few years ago and the only problem was the wind. Playing when the ship is in port

works better. There are specific pickleball them cruises that can be found on the internet. Playing pickleball and cruising with other fans of the sport can be a great combination.

## Tournament News

### *HCPA Tournament – November 17, 2019*

Lead by Joe Beitz with assistance from Duane, Rob and Earl, the association hosted a late fall tournament at the Owen Brown Tennis Club. There was an early morning session for Men's Doubles and an afternoon session for Mixed Doubles. Although a bit chilly, it was a very good time.





## Member Profile

*Proposed section for future newsletters. We intend to highlight one of our members for each edition, so we can get to know each other better. So, don't be surprised when someone from our association asks for some personal details.*

## Classified

*Proposed section for future newsletters. We offer this section for anyone who would like to advertise your business. Potential topics are:*

- *Instruction*
- *New and Used Equipment for Sale*
- *Free Stuff*