



Pickle Juice

Words from the Editor

Joanne Griesser

Every 17 years the Brood X Cicadas emerge from their underground hideaway and join the above ground world to live! After the pandemic and winter, it feels like 17 years since we have been on the courts in big numbers. Welcome back Brood X and Welcome back Pickleball!

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. Your input could appear in the next newsletter.

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From the President's Desk

President's Letter – May 2021

As the saying goes, “we can see the light at the end of the tunnel” and in our case I believe we are even closer than that. The pandemic has been our long dark tunnel and it is nice to see that we are starting to get closer to having things get back to normal. I believe Pickleball has been and continues to be one of the bright spots that has helped many of us get through those times. Each of us has adapted our playing to address the amount of risk we felt comfortable in taking on. Some had to put the sport on the back burner for later, some played at home in their driveways with family, others played with a small select group of friends, some felt comfortable in a larger setting and others discovered a new sport to break the monotony of quarantining at home. But in the end, whether it was the anticipation of getting back to playing normally or the enjoyment of getting out to play in any way we could, Pickleball provided a welcome distraction from the bleak time of the pandemic.

As with the spring season bringing new growth, so too is the current playing season brings growth to our sport and our association. Many members are starting to feel comfortable to return to playing. It is great to see friends we have not seen for a while and meeting new players who have caught the bug. As such, our association as grown to just over 400 members and we have added multiple play sessions to accommodate the growing demand for playtime. In support of that, we have invested money into additional equipment to conduct these sessions and have solicited new volunteers to help coordinate and manage these sessions. As I have said before, this association could not do and provide the many things we have been able to offer without the support of our volunteers. This includes the board members who help guide and administer the association as well as the session coordinators to set up and manage our play sessions. We are so grateful for their time and effort to help us share our enthusiasm and passion for this sport.

Fortunately, we are moving towards a more normal way of doing things, as we have prior to the pandemic. It will take some time before we are completely back to those pre-pandemic ways, but we are moving in the right direction. We have dropped the sign-up process for many of our sessions while still requesting people to sign in, so we have a record of who plays when for contact tracing if necessary. We have added multiple sessions during both the day and evening; in fact, this is the first time we are covering all 7 days of the week with multiple sessions per day. As the warm weather starts to arrive and more people get vaccinated, we should see more people playing again and we are trying to offer more playing opportunities.

In addition to our own organized play sessions, many players have acquired their own nets and are using the expanded facilities. We are fortunate to have Howard County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) expand their offerings of Pickleball lines on the 4 tennis courts of three parks, namely: Hammond Park, Schooly Mills Park and Western Regional Park. We are excited to hear that HCRP is now offering open play sessions, initially at two of these parks but eventually all three. Columbia Association is once again opening the Owen Brown Tennis Club’s pickleball courts to its members. Once they offer these facilities for rent, we will be able to schedule some Pickleball Socials as we did the summer of 2019.

As an association, we are anticipating holding our annual meeting in the near future. Ordinarily, we would hold it in June, the last month of our fiscal year but the board decided to push it back a month to

sometime in July in hopes that we may be able to gather in person rather than hold it virtually. The new fiscal year starting in July will also bring in a new Association President, Joanne Griesser. Joanne is a longtime member who helped develop and manage the association from the start as one of the original board members, holding the secretary's position, and then became our newsletter editor. I will continue to support the association as the Organized Play Coordinator and Webmaster, which in itself, is enough work for me. I feel fortunate to have contributed to the growth of our association and the opportunity to meet and play with so many great folks. I am proud to be a part of such a hospitable and friendly group of people and look forward to continuing to support the organization and play as much Pickleball as my body will allow. Hope to see you on the courts!

The Sonny Side of the Court

What's not to love about pickleball?

There is light on the horizon and things are starting to take a turn for the better. And with that, spring is in full bloom and there is plenty of pickleball to be played!

Not only are there more players of all levels coming out to join in the pickleball fun, but we continue to see [more courts](#) being put into use in a variety of local areas to play (such as Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County and other places).

Regardless of if you are a recreational player, a social butterfly or even a tournament level player, it is a great time to pick up the sport as well as continue developing your skills to achieve your personal goals on the courts.

As #Fansof3 here is a video with 3 tips from [Ben, Maggie, and me on what we love about pickleball](#):

1. Hit it hard – if you can even take this to the next level, sometimes a good attack (offense) is a way to pressure your opponent's into playing more defensively. Find the balance...
2. Practice with purpose – it is easy to just go out and just play, but if you are serious about improving your game, create purpose. Consider working on 1 thing at a time...
3. Listen to others – no matter how long you have been playing, or what your skill level might be...keep an open mind and listen to multiple perspectives. You can always learn...

By understanding how to create habits and building muscle memory, we minimize the stress and anxiety that we sometimes feel when we do not know what to do, or how to do it. But by focusing on developing your own game in this way, you ultimately improve how you play in the future. Feel free to connect with me via social media or check out my [website](#) to learn more!

See you on the courts!

With Optimism,

Sonny



Sonny Tannan

PPR Certified Professional | Team HEAD player | USAPA Ambassador



Interview with Bob Becker

Bob Becker is a fairly new member of our Association. He has been playing in Howard County for a little over a year. His wife Marianne is one of his pickleball partners when she is not on the tennis court. She is the person that introduced Bob to the sport. She saw people playing in the Pickleball Mecca, Naples Florida, and encouraged Bob to investigate. He took some lessons and brought his newly acquired skill-set back to Maryland.

A few folks that have helped Bob on his quest to learn the sport are Warren Brooks and Barry Leach. Bob says when Warren is his partner they always win. His paddle of choice is an extended handle; Warren told him it could extend his reach slightly. Something we could all use from time to time. Barry has helped coach him and made sure he knows where to play.

Many of you have probably seen Bob on the courts. His favorite places to play are the Ice Rink and Vantage House. You might recognize Bob, a 60 something man that laughs easily and sports a wheel chair. Bob has MS.

Bob has not always been in a wheel chair. He was an avid tennis player for years. You may have seen him in the 90's, running with the Howard County Striders, 30-40 miles per week. When he was in his 30's he was sponsored to run in the San Francisco Marathon. At age 40 he won a lottery position in the New York Marathon, but the MS had progressed too far for him to participate. Bob continued to walk several miles a day for many years, until one day he could not. Bob works a full time job, 46 years with the same company, St. John Properties where he holds the position of Senior Vice President. He mainly uses a scooter to get around the home and office. The wheel chair is a new addition to his vehicle collection since he discovered Pickleball.

If you have been lucky enough to play with Bob, he will call you his "Rabbit". His horizontal movement on the court is limited. His partner might have to cover a little more of the court than normal. He uses his palm on the wheels to move the chair while he holds the paddle handle with his fingers. It took some practice and a little while to learn that skill. He did mention that he needs new grips every few months, wheel burn! Bob said he has a decent forehand and is not quite at the 3.0 level yet, but he is working on it.

When he does his Snowbird trip to Florida, he plays every day for 3-4 hours. His coach is paraplegic and instructs from a wheel chair. Bob mentioned a tournament in Naples where one partner on each side of the court is playing in a wheel chair.

Bob's Sports Wheel Chair is slightly different from the conventional wheel chair. The wheels are slanted outward at the bottom for stability and ease of movement. Because of this configuration, Bob needs to have flat, paved access to the courts. Grass, steps and gate width can be a problem. It is something I am going to consider now; each time I approach a court, "Could Bob get here?"

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Bob's motto is, "Go with the cards you are dealt". Bob and I agreed that some of the friendliest people we know are on the Pickleball court. He has required assistance at times and people just jump in to help.

I hope that each one of us will get to meet and play with Bob, and have the opportunity to be his Rabbit.

Hit the Marc, Pro Corner

Hello HCPA from Marc Austin. I hope everyone is having a great spring. I wanted to let you all know that I am now an instructional writer for GAMMA! They saw the specialized clinics I offered through HCRP. They did some research of other training programs across the country. They came to me and said they could not find anyone else doing this type of great instruction. So, they asked me if I would write some instructional articles for them and of course I said "Yes!"

The first article I wrote was just published on April 5th in their worldwide Blog. The article is [Tips on Playing Better as Partners - GAMMA Sports Blog](#). I am super excited to have this opportunity. Please check it out and feel free to share this with anyone you know and play with.

I have included another article for your enjoyment.

[GAMMA Sports Blog - Never Stop Playing](#)

Keep your eye on the ball, I will be drafting three more instructional articles for GAMMA this year about my specialized clinics. I hope to see you all on the court soon.

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Team GAMMA

GAMMA Instructional Writer

Nationally Certified Professional Pickleball Instructor

Travel with Karen Moore

Pickleball Here, Pickleball There, Pickleball Everywhere

Now that we can almost see the light at the end of the Pandemic Tunnel, we are all anticipating and planning our future travels. When you pack your clothes, don't forget to pack your pickleball (PB) paddles.

When planning a trip, I search the internet for PB locations, dates, times, fees and levels of play. I also wear an affiliation logo t-shirt such as ours – the Howard County Pickleball Association which is always a conversation starter.

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Over the last several years, I have played PB throughout the country. To name a few locations, I have played PB facing the Pacific Ocean in Honolulu, Hawaii; I have played in the Outer Banks; I have played in the social hall of a church down South; I have even played on a cruise ship – now, that was interesting! I ended up being the official PB coordinator for the cruise ship, which was a great experience. Passengers would point at me and say – “there’s the Pickleball lady! When are we playing again?”

On a recent visit to see my Mom, who lives in a suburb of Richmond, VA, I, as always, searched for a PB location and sent the coordinator an email. When my Mom and I pulled up to the courts, I asked my Mom what she heard. She replied, “Chit chat and laughter. Yup, Mom, that is why I play PB.” Very shortly, I heard a man call out my name – “you must be Karen. Good to see you.” The players could not have been more welcoming. I can hardly wait to see my Mom again and my newly found PB friends. I look forward to hearing them say – “Welcome back, Karen. Good to see you, again.”

Remember, pickleball here, pickleball there, and pickleball everywhere. Pack those paddles and prepare to meet new pickleball friends.



Upcoming Events

We are not quite there yet, but we will try to schedule an in person Association Meeting in July. Keep a lookout for the announcement.

Where to Play

Check the Website for HOCO Pickleball Association sponsored play.

Recreation and Parks has open two new scheduled open play events. Sunday, 9-11 at Western Regional (or Windy Regional as folks that play there regularly know it).

Thursday evenings 6-8 at Hammond Park.

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They have not said how long they will run these program, but let us hope it is through the summer.

Humor

Pickleball is not the answer. Pickleball is the question. Yes is the answer.

Eat, Pray, Pickleball.

I thought the dryer was shrinking my clothes. Turns out it was the refrigerator all along.