



# PETANQUE PULSE

Official FPUSA Newsletter

*December 2024*

[usapetanque.org](http://usapetanque.org)



National Recreation and Park Association Conference, October 2024, Atlanta, GA

# Welcome to the End-of-Year Edition of *Petanque Pulse!*

In this packed issue, we're bringing you updates and news from our regional counselors and clubs across the country. Clubs have been buzzing with activities and tournaments. These stories make it clear that we thrive thanks to the dedication of our members who tirelessly contribute as club and national board members, committee members, umpires, tournament directors, event organizers, pétanque ambassadors, and more. Their efforts ensure the spirit of our community remains strong.

In addition to club and regional updates, this edition offers engaging insights, featured articles, and a heartfelt tribute to the members we lost this year. They will always be missed and remembered, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire us all.

# Contents

Message from the President.....	5
Updated Regulations.....	6
2025 Tournament Calendar.....	7
Dates for Nationals and World Championship Qualifier.....	7
Umpire News.....	8
Gary Jones - Umpire Emeritus.....	8
New Umpires.....	12
Umpire Contributions - Thank You!.....	13
Exhibition at the National Recreation and Park Association Conference.....	14
Shooting Kits Distributed to Clubs.....	16
News from the Southeast.....	17
Gainesville Petanque.....	17
National Men’s Triples Winners.....	19
South Florida Conducts Outreach.....	20
Miami Petanque Club Grows.....	20
Classic City Petanque Club.....	21
Leveling Up in Pétanque: Sönke Backens’ Elite Training Tour.....	23
News from Central.....	25
Thibodaux Petanque Club.....	25
News from NorCal.....	26
NorCal Cups Winners.....	27
Norcal Regional Men’s Triples Winners.....	28
Norcal Regional Men’s Doubles Winners.....	28
Save the Dates! Wine Country Open April 26 & 27.....	29
How Did the Noyo Yoyos Come About?.....	30
What’s it like to play in the biggest women’s pétanque tournament?.....	33
Feature: NorCal’s Philosopher-Shutterbugs: Alain Efron and Carlos Chavez.....	38
News from the Southwest.....	46
The West Coast Cup.....	46
Save the Dates! Blossom Trail Open March 22 & 23.....	49
News from the Northeast.....	50
La Boule New Yorkaise.....	50
News from Mid-America.....	52
Carolina Petanque Updates.....	52
Save the Dates! Carolina Open May 24 & 25.....	53
Carolina Petanque Strengthens Ties with the Alliance Française.....	54

Member Highlight: Preston Myers.....	56
Morganton Courts after Hurricane Helene.....	57
Shooting Competition.....	58
Mid-America Regional Mixed Triples Winners.....	59
Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia.....	60
Zanesfield Petanque.....	64
Bell Buckle Petanque Club.....	67
News from the Northwest.....	68
Portland’s Rose City Open “Fun Train” Delivers:.....	68
Floating String Lines: A Solution to Tripping Hazards.....	72
Mental Strategies for Enhancing Pétanque Performance.....	74
A Unique Pétanque Journey to France: A Conversation with Angie Gleason.....	78
US Juniors and Women’s Triples Teams (2025).....	82
2024 FPUSA Regional Results.....	83
2024 FPUSA National & Qualifier Results.....	85
In Memoriam.....	86
Paul Yang.....	87
Jean-Claude Etallaz.....	88
Mike Lee.....	89
Rosalie Marcovecchio.....	90
Alex Penate.....	90
Pierre Lallinec.....	91
Marc Vedrines.....	91
Edel Bahr.....	91
Tony Quinteros.....	92
Dick Pollard.....	92
Michel Claude Cardon.....	93
Claude Louis Levayer.....	93
Pierre Benjamin.....	94
Pierre Le Goff.....	94
Ernesto Santos.....	95

Club Directory

# Message from the President

---

Greetings,

As the year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to reflect on our journey together over the past twelve months. It has been a year of challenges and growth and none of it would have been possible without your support.

In 2024, we faced the passing of FPUSA President Ernesto Santos and the transition on the executive board. However, thanks to your commitment, we expanded our reach with new partnerships for the promotion of the sport, had one of the busiest tournament schedules in recent history and updated many of the guidelines of the organization. With each initiative, we've seen the power of community and collaboration.

I would like to welcome a recent addition to the FPUSA community - *Palmetto Petanque*, located in the Charleston area of South Carolina.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited to continue this journey with you. Our goals include extending the general promotion of the sport, expand the nonprofit status of the clubs, access the individual needs of the clubs for growth, create more opportunities for competition, and we hope to have your continued support as we strive to fulfill the FPUSA mission of building a strong growing community of pétanque enthusiasts.

As we celebrate the successes of this year and prepare for the next, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude. Together, we are making a difference, and I am optimistic about what we can achieve in the coming year.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season and a happy New Year!

Warm regards,

**Kirk Edwards**

FPUSA President



# Regulations

## Updated Regulations

---

We have updated **Tournament and Umpire Regulations**.

Members can access these documents on the [FPUSA's Documents](#) webpage or by using the links below.

- [Tournament Regulations](#)
  - [Umpire Regulations](#)
- 

Special thanks to the following individuals for their contributions in updating the Tournament Regulations:

- Ernesto Santos
- Kirk Edwards
- Janice Bissonnette
- Sports Committee: Albyn Jones, Stefan Nicolas, Christophe Sarafian, and Lisa Skerl

Also, our deep appreciation goes to Gary Jones, Heidi Davison, David Johnstone, Dan Goldfisher, Albyn Jones, Joe Cortright, John Harris, and Janice Bissonnette for their work in updating the Umpire Regulations.



## 2025 Tournament Calendar

Dates for Nationals and World Championship Qualifier

Dates	Event	Host Club
May 17-18	Men's Triples World Championship Qualifier	Ohlala Petanque Sanford, Florida
June 14-15	National Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, & Mixed Doubles	Portland Petanque Portland, Oregon
Sept 27-28	National Men's Triples & Women's Triples	Valley of the Moon Petanque Sonoma, California
Oct 18-19	National Men's Singles, Women's Singles, & Mixed Triples	Fresno Petanque Fresno, California

**Note:** Upon renewing your membership, you'll receive an email with a link to download your 2025 FPUSA digital membership card. Open the email on your phone and tap the appropriate button (Google Wallet or Apple Wallet) to add it. Alternatively, you can log into your JustGo account on your phone and download the card directly from your profile. A printable card is also available and can be downloaded from your profile.

If you need help with downloading your membership card, you may contact your club president/administrator or Michelle Dang, [sactownpetanque@gmail.com](mailto:sactownpetanque@gmail.com).



## Umpire News

---

### Gary Jones - Umpire Emeritus

Gary Jones is named Umpire Emeritus! Over the years, Gary has umpired countless tournaments, setting high standards for fair play and precision. He has also been instrumental in mentoring other umpires, generously sharing his knowledge and passion for the sport. His impact resonates across the community, with colleagues praising his commitment, professionalism, and mentorship. We acknowledge and celebrate Gary's invaluable role, grateful for his many years of service and the positive legacy he leaves for future generations of umpires. *Thank you Gary!*

**Shirley Jones'** comments about Gary's retirement:

*Gary has always taken great pride in completing any task as perfectly as he can. When he became an umpire, he dedicated himself to studying the rules and discussing them with USA umpires at all levels, as well as with international umpires. Though he was*



*encouraged to pursue an international license, he chose to focus his efforts here at home. Now he can concentrate on continuing to help with a lower profile and pursue other interests. He'll always be an umpire! In fact, some of our CP members say they know that even in his absence, Gary "twitches" whenever they violate a rule!*

---

## Tributes to Gary

### Honoring Gary Jones: A Legacy of Dedication, Grace, and Kindness in Pétanque

*In every sport, there are those rare individuals whose impact resonates far beyond their role. For the sport of pétanque in the United States, Gary Jones is one such person—a national umpire who recently retired after dedicating years of his life to fostering the growth and spirit of the game. With kindness, humor, and an unwavering commitment to fairness, Gary left an indelible mark on all who had the pleasure of knowing and working with him. His retirement is a bittersweet moment for the Fédération of Pétanque USA (FPUSA), marking the end of an era defined by excellence and empathy in officiating.*

*Gary's journey as an umpire was never solely about enforcing rules or maintaining order. He approached each game and each player with an open heart and a steady hand, ensuring that everyone—from newcomers to seasoned competitors—felt respected, understood, and encouraged. His patience and humor were legendary. Known for the way he could ease tension with a well-timed joke or a reassuring smile, Gary showed us all how authority could be wielded with compassion and integrity.*



*My own experience with Gary is just one example of his thoughtful approach. A couple of years ago, Gary administered my club umpire test, and while I felt confident about the written portion, I was anxious about the practical measuring section. With his trademark grace, he guided me through each step, offering calm encouragement that helped me find my confidence. That moment was the beginning of an enduring friendship. For*

*Gary, it wasn't just about passing or failing a test—it was about cultivating a sense of trust in oneself and in the role of umpiring as a means of fostering respect and camaraderie in the sport.*

*Gary's influence didn't end with a simple test. Just recently, I found myself unexpectedly appointed as the "Acting" head umpire at a national FPUSA tournament after a recent hurricane affected travel plans of participants. With no other officials available, it could have been an overwhelming situation for a club-level umpire like myself. Yet, I didn't feel alone. Gary, true to his generous spirit, was only a call or text away. Armed with his personal notes on the FPUSA rules—a treasure trove of insights from his years of experience—I knew I had Gary's expertise and wisdom at my fingertips. His support guided me through every call and difficult decision, strengthening my confidence in moments of uncertainty.*

*The way Gary continued to extend his mentorship even in his final months as an active umpire speaks volumes about his character. He embodied the highest standards of officiating—not just in technical knowledge but in the way he treated everyone around him. His belief in fairness and empathy as essential components of competition reminded us all that the spirit of pétanque is about more than simply winning or losing; it's about building connections, learning, and sharing in the joy of the game.*

*As Gary transitions away from his official role, his legacy will surely live on in the countless players and umpires he's influenced. He has shaped a community where respect, kindness, and love for pétanque are paramount. And, for those of us who were fortunate enough to work alongside him, he has set a powerful example: one that reminds us that the strength of an umpire—or anyone in a position of authority—lies not just in enforcing rules, but in fostering understanding and community.*

*I am sure that not just myself, but the entire FPUSA community, thank you, Gary, for all that you have given us. Your impact on the sport and on each of us individually is profound. We wish you all the best in your retirement, knowing that your spirit and dedication will continue to inspire us for many years to come.*

**- Cathy Diebold, Thibodaux Petanque**

*Gary Jones has been the epitome of a professional pétanque umpire. He has proven himself to be competent, responsible, honest and impartial while consistently acting with integrity and respect towards all members of the pétanque community. Gary's dedication to the promotion of the sport and the development and training of the umpire corps has been admirable. His contributions as a teacher of the game as well as his annotations and rules interpretations for umpires are to be commended. Gary Jones has been committed to setting an exemplary example in all circumstances while representing the sport and the federation; it is only fitting that he be awarded Umpire Emeritus status by the FPUSA. Congratulations, Gary! - **Anonymous Member***

*I've always had great respect for Gary as an umpire. He has been a model of decorum: always calm and clear. And whenever we've discussed how to interpret the sometimes vague rules, he invariably provides a well-reasoned perspective.*

**- Joe Cortright**, Portland Petanque

---

*Gary Jones epitomized the type of Umpire and person that I strive to be. Honest and fair with an unyielding fidelity to the rule book – even when he might not have personally agreed that the rules were the best. He showed us all how it should be done.*

**- Al Davison**, Classic City Petanque

---

*This tribute to Gary is well deserved. I have not interacted with him much in person, except in Asheville this year. I am happy to have many documents with helpful comments from him that improve my umpiring. I am delighted to contribute, as a young referee in the USA, to continue his valuable work for so many years.*

**- Emmanuel le Bihan**, Fresno Petanque

*Many of you know Gary far longer than I, but in my short time I have witnessed his dedication to and love of petanque. Carolina Petanque would not be the strong and growing club it is today were it not for his many hours of tireless effort supporting that club in ways too numerous to mention. I have witnessed him mentor new umpires, including my own husband, Al. He is a font of knowledge about petanque, umpiring, and the rules of the game, which he freely shares. His [annotated rules document](#)*



*is an important tool to keep in one's hip pocket. His umpiring philosophy is to teach first and I have witnessed him do just that countless times. I'm sure this barely scratches the surface. Thank you, Gary! I'm privileged to know Gary and call him friend; I've been the beneficiary of his help and kindness over and over again and for that he has my deepest appreciation.*

**- Heidi Davison**, Classic City Petanque

# New Umpires

---

Congratulations to the following new and promoted umpires!  
(updated since July 2024)

**Port Townsend Petanque Alliance:**

Tom Challinor

**Lamorinda Petanque Club:**

Sebastian Lofaro

Duncan Wheat

Fraser Bradshaw

George Colliat

Neil McGovern

**Classic City Petanque Club:**

Rickamer Hoover

**Maine Boules Club:**

Brad Mattes

Max Mattes

Dugald Kell

**Carolina Petanque:**

Jesse Israel

**South Florida Petanque Club:**

Alain Gimenez

**Fresno Petanque:**

Janice Bissonnette

**Les Boulefrogs Petanque Club of Virginia:**

Mark Rankin



Al Davison (standing) conducting an umpire test for Mark Rankin

---

# Umpire Promotions

**Fresno Petanque:**

Emmanuel le Bihan - Regional Umpire

By Vang -Regional Umpire

---

**[Roster of Current Umpires](#)**

Interested in becoming an umpire? Please reach out to **Heidi Davison**, Leader of the Umpire Working Group, [heidi@heididavison.com](mailto:heidi@heididavison.com).

# Umpire Contributions - Thank You!

---

We extend our gratitude to the following members for serving as lead or assistant umpires at this year's Nationals and Qualifier events. We also recognize the many members contributing their time and expertise to club and regional events - your dedication is invaluable, and we truly appreciate you!

## **National Singles & Mixed Triples:**

**Joe Cortright - Lead** (Portland)  
John Harris (Oakhurst)  
Jo Ella Manalan (So Florida)

## **National Men's/Women's Doubles & Mixed Doubles:**

**Joe Cortright - Lead** (Portland)  
Andre Strong (Maine)  
John Harris (Oakhurst)  
Bill Cooke (Carolina)  
Barbara Kongsbak (Portland)  
Cathy Diebold (Thibodaux)  
Cynthia Stroud (Maine)  
Jen Sliker (Portland)  
Kaye Norris (Amelia)  
Tracie Jeffries (Carolina)  
Al Davison (Classic City)  
Gary Ragan (Nelson Ranch)  
Guy Diebold (Thibodaux)  
Al Guarisco (Thibodaux)  
Manu le Bihan (Fresno)  
Bill Norris (Amelia)  
Larry Creasy (Amelia)  
John Wilson (Carolina)

## **National Men's Triples:**

**Cathy Diebold - Lead** (Thibodaux)  
Guy Diebold (Thibodaux)  
Gary Jones (Carolina)  
Larry Creasy (Amelia Island)

## **WC Qualifiers Men's Doubles:**

**Joe Cortright - Lead** (Portland)  
John Harris (Oakhurst)  
Gregory Conyers (Edmonds)  
Michelle Dang (Sactown)

## **WC Qualifiers Women's Doubles:**

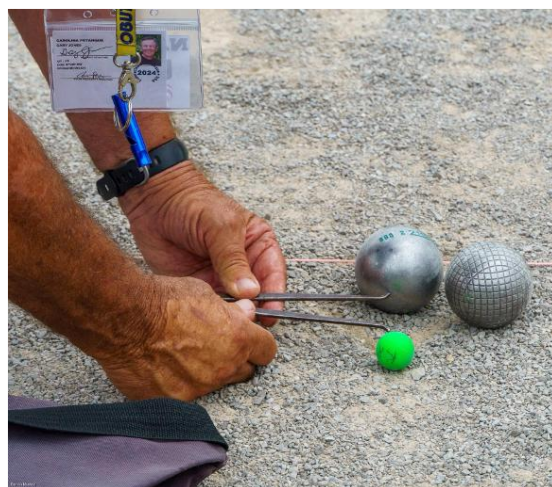
**Antonio Lofaro - Lead** (La Pétanque  
Mariniere)  
Bleys Rose (Petaluma)

## **WC Qualifiers Juniors:**

**David Kiel - Lead** (Mile High)

## **WC Qualifiers Women's Triples:**

**Kirk Edwards - Lead** (Carolina)





## Exhibition at the National Recreation and Park Association Conference

By Heidi Davison, Classic City Petanque

**FPUSA** and **Petanque America (PA)** teamed up to be exhibitors at the **2024 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Annual Conference** in **Atlanta, GA**. **Heidi Davison**, Classic City Petanque, represented FPUSA and the Petanque America team were **Marc Quilici**, **Kathy Cline**, and **Juan Hernandez** (Carolina Petanque).

Attendees were introduced to the sport with an opportunity to actually throw some boules thanks to both an outdoor and indoor playing area built out by the PA team using a makeshift wooden floor and a gravel terrain (a LOT of gravel!). The two courts were surrounded by beautiful photographs taken by **Artem Zuev** (LAPC) and a panel of all the FPUSA member club logos created by **Kathy Cline**.



All collateral materials produced by Petanque America included the FPUSA logo and a link to our website including their business cards, magnets, and 'How to Play' handout. Additionally, they created a separate website: [petanqueinparks.com](http://petanqueinparks.com) and **Michelle Dang** (Sactown) created a FPUSA brochure that can be replicated in the future by FPUSA or member clubs for promotional purposes.



Every person who stopped by was asked where they lived so we could direct them to a nearby club, if possible. Many of them were searching for a different, unique activity for both children and adults. We emphasized that petanque is a low cost/easy to maintain, portable, and accessible sport and local clubs are working partners with their parks departments. All of us enjoyed some very long, productive conversations and received a lot of positive feedback.



We hope to continue partnering with Petanque America in the future. They go to great lengths to connect their buyers with local clubs through personal conversations and informational handouts placed inside of packages.

# Shooting Kits Distributed to Clubs

FPUSA has provided a shooting kit for every club. These kits were recently distributed during the Women's Qualifier event in New York and to club presidents and regional counselors at the Amelia Island Open. If you have not yet received your kit, please reach out to **Kirk Edwards** (edwards.kirk@gmail.com), or **Janice Bissonette** (janice@jpbusadv.com) for assistance.

A big thank you to **Alain Gimenez** (South Florida PC) for sharing these [step-by-step pictures](#) on how to assemble the kit and the FIPJP [Precision Shooting Rules](#).





# News from the Southeast

## Gainesville Petanque

By Sarah Lauerman

After a delay imposed on us by TWO hurricanes, Gainesville Petanque and the Gainesville Sports Commission hosted the third annual pétanque tournament featured in the **Gainesville Senior Games** on October 19th. The Senior Games are held in over 14 cities here in Florida and feature a variety of competitive sports opportunities for athletes over the age of 50.

Here at Gainesville Petanque, we host pétanque as a **Panache Doublette**, where you play with a new random partner for each game but you accumulate points for yourself. We favor this format as it mixes up the different skill levels within our club; more experienced players are often paired with less experienced players, encouraging players to emphasize teamwork and collegiality. We also believe this format is a very beginner friendly tournament format and hope to expand our exposure to the larger Senior Games community.



At the scorekeepers table, from left to right, Sarah Lauerman, Greg Johnson, Ward Lindsey



Brenden Burke and Sue Percival



Bob Stevens pointing in

This year’s Panache winner was **Greg Johnson** (center), Gainesville Petanque’s Vice-President, winning all four of his games. Second place was **David Spofford** (right), and Third was **Brenden Burke** (left), a first year player with great skills.





## National Men's Triples Winners

The National Men's Triples took place at the **Ohlala** Orlando Pétanque Association on October 20, 2024. Congratulations to all the winners! A heartfelt thank you to referees **Cathy and Guy Diebold**, as well as **Larry Creasy**, for their exceptional attention to detail throughout the matches. Your dedication ensured a fair and enjoyable competition for all. The event was a success, with everyone having a fantastic time. Additionally, Ohlala hosted a club tournament on October 19, making it a memorable weekend of pétanque.



**Gold: Frederic Penaranda, Fouad Lahoune, & Hassan Lakhdar (above)**

Silver: Stefan Nicolas, Jerome Nicolas, & Fabian Nicolas

Bronze: Jerry Miller, Raymond Neilsen, & Ziggy Kessouagni

## South Florida Conducts Outreach

In July, between the rain showers and the blazing sun, SFPC members **Gloria, Lily, Yves, and Jo Ella** taught pétanque to families at **Norton Museum of Arts' "Games Around the World."** It was a fun time and a great way for people to learn about the game.



## Miami Petanque Club Grows

The Miami Pétanque Club is thriving! In less than a year, our membership has doubled, growing from fewer than 10 members to an impressive 20. Much of this success is thanks to the dedication of **David Fournier**, who has worked tirelessly to secure a great location for us to play and to bring in both new and seasoned players. We're excited about our plans for even greater growth in the near future!



L to R: Fabian, Mikael, Leo, Christian, Yiannis, David and Eli in front

Our last tournament was a milestone, with the highest number of club members competing in recent memory. The energy and enthusiasm were incredible, and we can't wait to build on this momentum.

# Classic City Petanque Club

By Heidi Davison

In honor of **National Singles Day**, our club held a singles tournament with 23 members participating over the course of the day. This is a format that most of us have not tried so this was a great opportunity to experience it in a safe setting. Everyone had a lot of fun and built up their confidence.



Winners: Rickamer Hoover 1st place (bottom, second from right), Jessica Lehman 2nd place (to his right), and Charlie Appleby (top, second from left)

We all found it rather suspicious that the TD (Rickamer), his girlfriend, and the first person to ever invite him to be a tournament partner all placed in the top three spots!

For the second year we hosted a **Vauclusienne** (6-ball) as our fall tournament format. Classic City entered 24 teams and Atlanta Petanque League entered two (2). First place: Rob Trevena (CCPC) plus Kristy and Quito Anderson (APL - the beloved interlopers.) In the back is Cori, Kristy's sister and a new CCPC member.





Tied for 2nd place: Rickamer Hoover, Gail Hawkins, Al Davison, Elliot Bailey  
3rd place winners: Dan and Erin Dolan and Allen Cassady. (no photo available)



National French Week brought out 12 players from the University of Georgia's French and Language Community for an afternoon of fun with our club as they learned about and played pétanque. The UGA coordinator for this event, Anais (known as AJ, front 3rd from left in photo), made us French flag pins to wear in celebration.

# Leveling Up in Pétanque: Sönke Backens' Elite Training Tour

By Heidi Davison, Classic City Petanque

Five clubs in the **Southeast** and **Mid-America regions** (South Florida, Amelia Island, Gainesville, Classic City, and Carolina) thoroughly enjoyed training sessions with **Sönke Backens**! Sönke is the coach of the **German National Women's team**. His credentials include: B-Trainer, the highest coaching degree in the sport of petanque and instructor certification from the **German Olympic Sports Association**. In addition to being the team coach, he is also a mental coach and a lecturer in the fields of anatomy and physiology. Sönke also plays for the **German Petanque Association** winning multiple national championships.



All participants were enthusiastic about Sönke's methods, tips, and especially the video analyses where he showed the elements of our throws that could be improved. The training sessions were outstanding! Training participants who attended the Amelia Island Open were delighted to visit and/or play with Sonke and his partner, **Matthias Laukart**, who have won this tournament in the past.





The clubs wish to thank **Songmi Keating**, Amelia Island Boules Club, very much for organizing Sönke's trip to the US and bringing us this rare and worthwhile training opportunity. Sönke told us how well Song handled everything for him, and he was very impressed with the schedule. He also told us how he was blown away by the hospitality we all extended to him.

Here's to improving our pétanque skills!

---





# News from Central

## Thibodaux Petanque Club

*Get ready for the Mardi Gras!*

**King Carreau** and **Queen Fanny** invite you to join them as part of this year's wondrous and mystic **Krewe of Petanque** at the [2025 Mardi Gras Open](#). Come join them for an entire WEEKEND of pétanque and revelry. The fun starts Friday and keeps rolling along through parades on Sunday.

All registered players in the tournament are bestowed with the honor of membership in the wondrous and mystic Krewe of Petanque. The traditions of the Krewe are closely held, but it is well-known that each year's King Carreau and Queen Fanny are selected from those krewe members in attendance. We hope you will join us to celebrate their kind and benevolent reign.

*Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler*



**The event is currently at capacity, but we are accepting waitlist registrations.**





Norcal Interclub Winner - Valley of the Moon Petanque Club  
VOMPC winning team: Barry Serota, Lucas Lackner, & Wolfie Kurz

## News from NorCal

Here in Northern California, we stayed active with club and FPUSA events throughout summer and fall. The weather was sunny through early November, so we enjoyed a lot of pétanque! Several clubs held their annual “Cup” tournaments with **Lamorinda** hosting a festive Halloween Cup where some participants enthusiastically dressed in costumes.

**Lamorinda** and **Fresno** also co-hosted a fun **Interclub Tournament**, which turned out to be a big success with participation of all Norcal clubs and Fresno. **VOMPC** (Sonoma) was victorious and claimed the title for 2024. They will get to host the event in 2025. Some Norcal members also traveled far to play in Opens such as NY, Amelia Island, and Portland.

**Ann Krilanovich, President of La Boule d’Or (SF)** is excited to report that the **Golden Gate Park** is working with their club to add more courts. They will have 16 courts and plan to host FPUSA tournaments next year. We can’t wait to compete in this beautiful setting! Thank you, Ann!



Hans Kurz flexing as T-Rex

# NorCal Cups Winners



**VOMPC Sonoma Cup Winners:**  
Peter Mathis, Dave Lanter, & Patrick Vaslet (VOMPC)



**Lamorinda Cup Winners:**  
By Vang & Janice Bissonnette (Fresno)



**La Petanque Mariniere Commemorative Cup Winners:**  
Kham Chounlamany & Janice Bissonnette (Fresno)

## Norcal Regional Men's Triples Winners

Gold (left) - Emmanuel le Bihan, By Vang, & Kham Chounlamany (Fresno)  
Silver (center) - Wolfie Kurz, PJ Mallette, & Peter Mathis (VOMPC)  
Bronze (right) - Kue Lee, Damien Monnet, & Christophe Sarafian (Sactown & VOMPC)



## Norcal Regional Men's Doubles Winners

Gold (left) - Yor Lee & Kue Lee (Sactown)  
Silver (center) - Patrick Vaslet & Damien Monnet (VOMPC)  
Bronze (right) - Peter Mathis & Mickey Coughlin (VOMPC)



(pictured with Holly Sammons - Tournament Director)

Save the Dates! Wine Country Open April 26 & 27



*The Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club is proud to host*

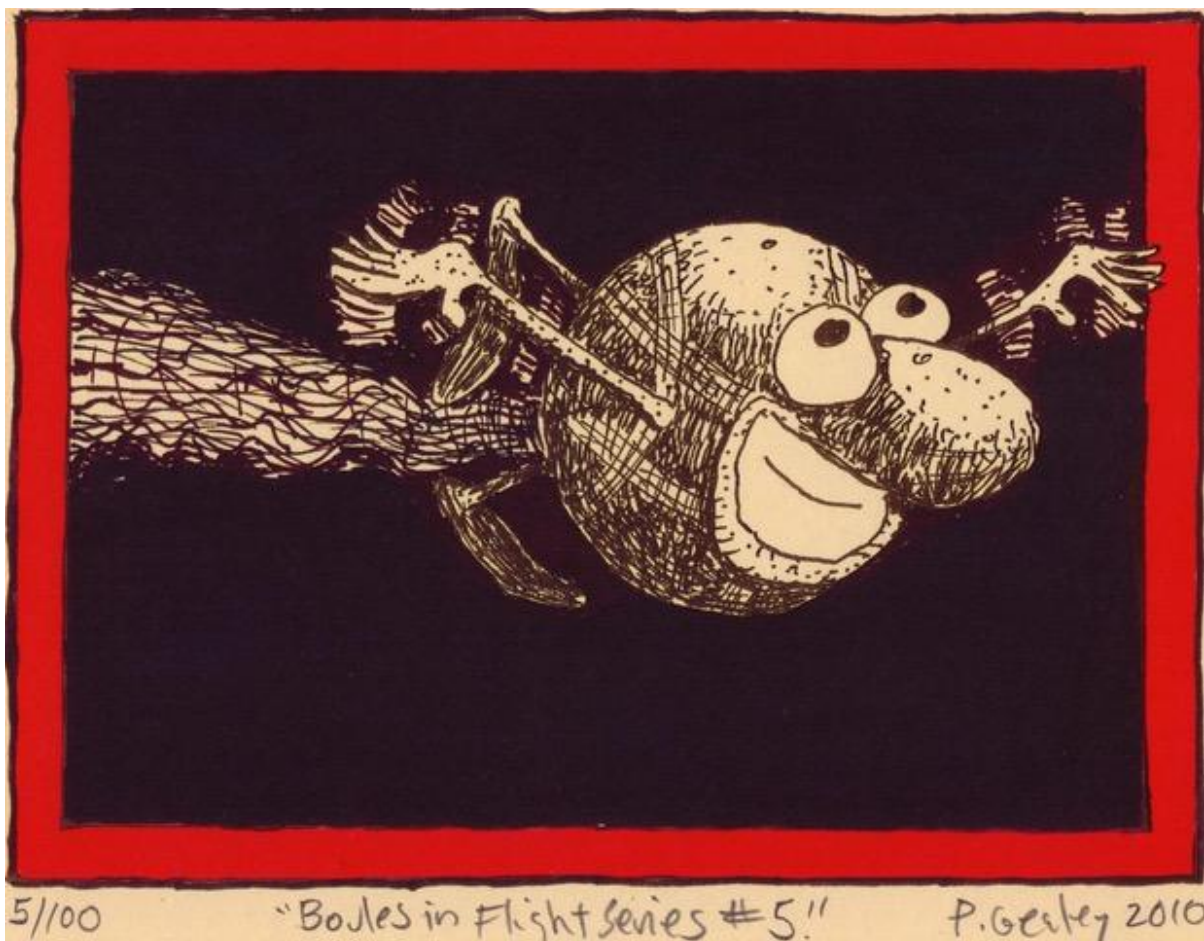
**The 2025  
Wine Country Open!**

**Saturday, April 26, and  
Sunday, April 27, 2025**

***Registration opens on January 2!***

**In beautiful Sonoma, California**

<https://www.vompc.org/wco/>



## How Did the Noyo Yoyos Come About?

### A Story of Our Club

by Peter Gealey  
President, Noyo Yoyos Pétanque Club

Our regional counselor, Michelle Dang, kindly invited me to share the tale of our club, and I'm delighted to do so. My introduction to this wonderful game dates back to the early 2000s, thanks to **Stefan** and **Iren** (right), a Swiss couple living in **Fort Bragg, CA** at the time. We played in friends' backyards and on gravel driveways, which served us well for a while.



By the end of 2007, we decided it was time to find a proper playing surface and start a club. In the spring of 2008, we discovered an ideal spot: the baseball infields of Fort Bragg.



At the Fort Bragg High School baseball field in 2008

Unfortunately, when baseball season arrived, we had to move on. That's when we found a parking area down in **Noyo Harbor**, owned by a sea urchin processing company. They graciously allowed us to use their space, and they spread sea urchin shells to control the mud, creating a unique surface for our games.



Some Noyo Yoyos in the harbor in 2010

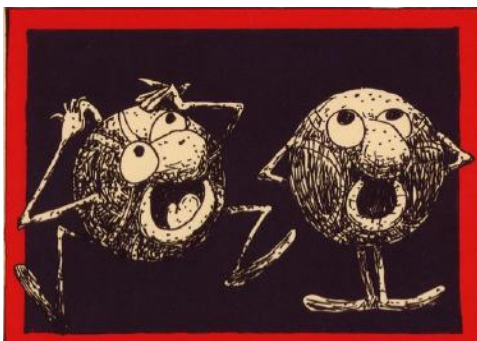
It was then that we decided our club needed a name. After tallying the votes, we became The Noyo Yoyos! We continued playing at the harbor until 2011, when a pivotal change occurred. **Dan Feaster** - whom many of you may remember as a former FPUSA president - spearheaded a successful campaign for funding. Thanks to a grant from the **Mendocino Parks & Recreation Department**, we built two pistes: one at the **CV Starr Center** in Fort Bragg and another at the **Mendocino Community Center**. Both remain in use by our club to this day.

True to our playful name, we Yoyos prioritize fun above all. While many members play purely for social enjoyment, others participate in tournaments (as some of you may have seen firsthand). From 2012 to 2019, we hosted the **Skip Wollenberg Memorial Select Doubles Tournament**. Although it was paused during the pandemic, we hope to revive it when we move to a proper piste.



As a personal note, I've also enjoyed blending art with pétanque by creating cartoons inspired by the game. Some of these works are shared with you here.

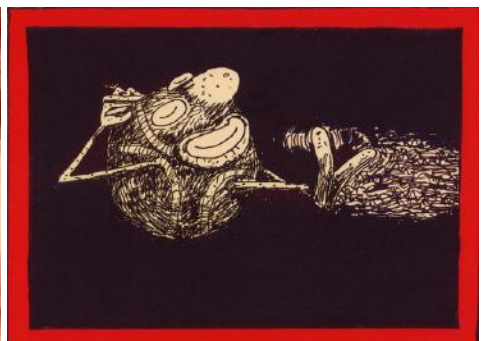
Keep throwing those boules and having fun!



4/100 "Boules on the Ground Series #2" P. Gealey 2010



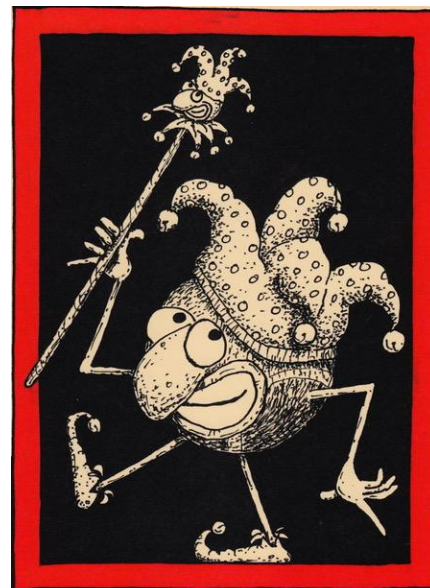
"Boules Playing Ukuleles" P. Gealey 2012



4/100 "Boules in Flight Series #3" P. Gealey 2011



2/75 "Noodle Boules #2 (The Far-falle shoots)" P. Gealey 2011



1/75 "The Boule Fool" P. Gealey 2013



## What's it like to play in the biggest women's pétanque tournament?

By Michelle Dang, Sactown Petanque

In a word: unforgettable! When I was asked to participate in the event, my response was simple: “*When do I leave?*”

The 4-day “100% féminin” tournament took place in **Palavas-les-Flots, France**, a laid-back beach town on the Mediterranean, not far from **Montpellier**. Known for its sandy beaches, seafood, and colorful harbor, it's a popular destination for a sunny getaway among the French. During the week of the tournament, Palavas was buzzing with energy, hundreds of women players from **France, several European countries, Canada, Mexico, Peru, and the U.S.** came to compete. This tournament is considered the “biggest” women's tournament, both in terms of participant numbers and competitive level.

My teammates were **Christine Fadden** (left) and **Angie Gleason** (center). The three of us played in Marseille the summer before so we were excited to have the band reunite for this event. We had shirts made that said “*Maine - Washington - California*” in front, representing our states, and USA in the back, representing our country. Players ranged from teens to women in their 70s - though it was hard to tell how old anyone was because, let's face it, the French have an age-defying *je ne sais pas quoi* that makes everyone



Poster credit: Palavas Pétanque



look eternally youthful and vibrant. Young or old, the level of confidence these women brought to the courts was palpable. They strutted into the circle like they owned it, tying up their skirts and beach coverups during pre-tournament warm up games. Sure, it was hot, and they were simply trying to beat the heat, but talk about style while throwing boules! In Palavas, the women moved, pointed, and shot with a sense of ease and effortlessness. From the get-go, it was clear that the French know how to play pétanque and how to *live* pétanque.

The tournament was divided into singles, doubles, and triples, with the triples being the crown jewel event. There were 240 singles teams, 180 doublettes, and 153 tripllettes. The first day? We were on our own - singles. Our task was simple: survive pool play. The two of us who made it out of the pool were promptly eliminated, but even as I was sent packing, I couldn't help but be starstruck by the presence of players such as **Mouna Beji**, **Angelique Colombet**, **Torea Tairio**, and **Nelly Peyré** (to name a few) who were continuing on, playing like it was just another day at the office, on courts all around us.



Focused and determined despite the heat

All games were untimed (yes!), and thanks to top-notch organization, the tournaments proceeded smoothly. To handle hundreds of players, courts were assigned for all games. After our pool play, we'd submit our scores at the central station (cue the long queue), wait to get assigned our next opponent, and prepare for the next match. Even if you were eliminated early, you had a second chance to enter your name and play in another tournament in the afternoon. The level of play didn't drop then either. Everyone came to Palavas with an in it to win it mindset, evidenced by impeccable first boules and the constant *clink, clink, clink* of *au fer* shots.

Angie and I, in doubles, faced two players who were members of the French National Juniors' team. We knew the match would be tough when we saw them hitting *carreaux* during warm up. They played an aggressive game - point

one, shoot five - and we held steady for over an hour to make them earn their 13 points. But in the end, our play and experience were no match for two young women who had been playing, it seemed, before they could walk.

The terrain in Palavas was challenging. The courts were ungroomed, with uneven patches of dirt, scattered pebbles, areas of dead grass, and slopes and gullies. Pointing required exceptional control, as the boule could easily be deflected by the rough and sometimes very runny ground. Shooting, too, had to be precise. If you didn't aim directly at the target ball, forget it - ground shots bounced like bunnies. Unless you moved up in rankings and made it to the courts specially prepared for televised games, which were groomed and more leveled, you competed - like we did - on rugged, unpredictable surfaces.



Our friendly opponents

When we were finally eliminated, we hydrated, and then watched the magic unfold. High-level players (women who can handle any terrain) were on full display, effortlessly moving between intense focus and lighthearted chatter. No drama. No tantrums. Just pure pétanque played with respect and joy. Every match at Palavas, whether we were playing in it or observing, offered invaluable lessons in etiquette and how to honor the game.

The throws up close were the real magic. It's one thing to see a beautiful shot on YouTube and quite another to witness one live. **Audrey Bandiera's** squatting plombées were surreal - so high they seemed to defy gravity, and so precise they landed right next to the cochonnet like destiny. **Torea's** curve shots? Absolute art, like she was sculpting her boules mid-air, bending them into the perfect position for a carreau. **Angelique**, calm and composed, was pro all the way. She showed her decades of experience with each throw and decision and as the brackets tightened - the epitome of

grace under pressure. Angie, Christine, and I were especially impressed by (and were rooting for!) **Maryse Bergeron**, a good-natured and excellent player from Canada. Her wind-up, with her elbow locked and arm turned upward in a seemingly impossible 90° angle as she prepared to shoot, was incredible. To repeat this motion over the course of four days, match after match and hour after hour, must have been incredibly strenuous. Maryse showed remarkable skill by making it to the finals in both the singles and triples. Unfortunately, she lost both matches to two French teams - **Manon Debard** in the singles and the accomplished trio **Cindy Peyrot, Maëlle Bertrand, and Nelly Peyré** in the triples. The doubles winners were **Emilie Vignères** and **Jessica Tronche** (France).



Audrey in action

Finally, when we weren't on the courts, we experienced the social side of the tournament, which was not just about fierce competition but also community. Despite the high stakes, the vibe was refreshingly friendly. Players and organizers treated us with warmth and cheery conversations, sharing stories of their visits to the U.S. and asking, sometimes in awe, about the popularity of pétanque in the States. When not playing or talking with women from around the globe, we strolled around Palavas, enjoyed gelato, and *dîné à la terrasse*. Talk about a dream pétanque weekend come true!



Having a fangirl moment with Torea Tairio, member of the French National Team

#### Some Additional Takeaways:

- ❖ Stamina is key. The heat was brutal, and the courts were wide open to the sun, even the breeze felt hot. If you made it past the early rounds, there was a real chance you'd still be playing at 11 PM.
- ❖ Skorts (skirt and shorts in one) are not allowed during tournaments. This policy took us by surprise. Christine had to quickly replace her favorite skort with regular shorts after arriving on the courts to play her first match.
- ❖ French-style cheek kisses with your opponents are expected. No handshakes or fist bumps. These friendly kisses somehow softened the atmosphere, making everything feel instantly warmer and more welcoming.
- ❖ Knowing French is a *serious* plus. Everything was in French including announcements. Angie was our trusty translator, and I can't thank her enough for guiding us.
- ❖ The price to play? A mere 8 euros per person. Seriously, that's less than a movie ticket, and you get to play pétanque all day long. Granted, there are costs to get there of

course, but I wouldn't say it was much more than flying across the U.S. to play in one of our tournaments.

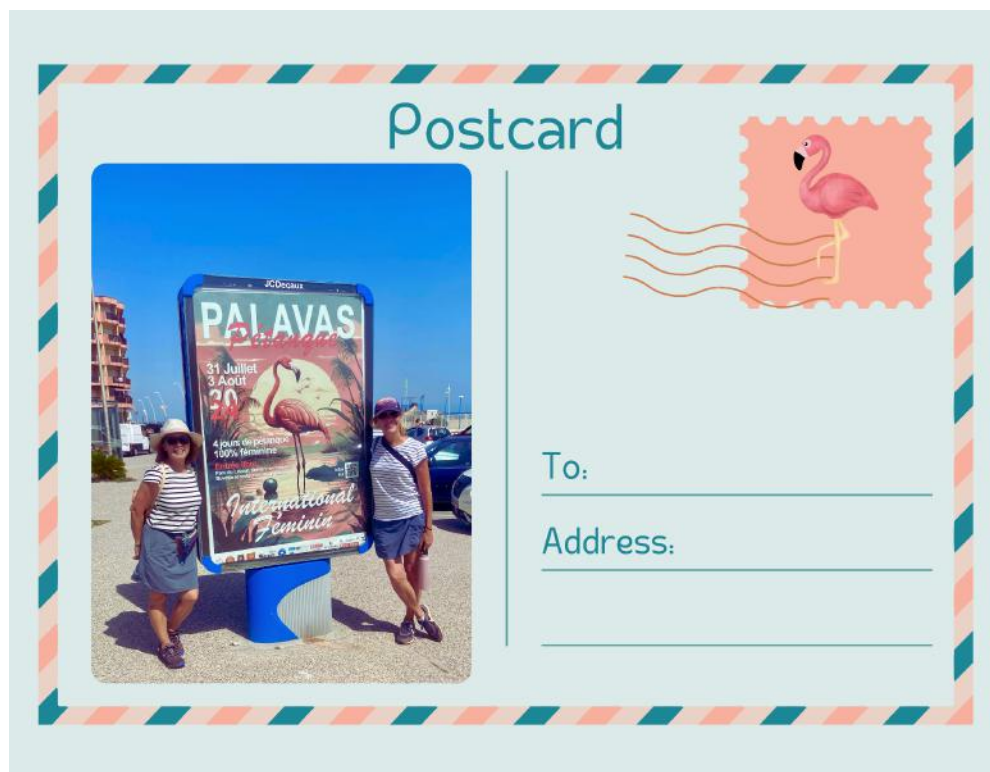
So, what did I learn from our time in Palavas? It wasn't just about the wins or losses - it was about the experience of playing very high-level games and celebrating women's pétanque in all its glory. I have never played in a tournament with so many excellent women players of *all* ages. The experience has inspired me to play the game with the same fearlessness as the women in Palavas. I even had an opponent who was 6 months pregnant and hitting carreaux!

I also realized, or rather had it reinforced, that having supportive, humorous, and kind teammates made the experience incredibly fun - on and off the courts. Thank you Angie and Christine for making Palavas truly unforgettable.

Palavas will stay in my heart, and I look forward to more chances to compete among such amazing women players and being fully immersed in the joy of competition.

*Merci Palavas Pétanque!*

---



Acknowledgement: Special thanks to my teammate, the consummate writer Christine Fadden, for her thoughtful refinements and wordsmithing of the article.

## Feature: NorCal's Philosopher-Shutterbugs: Alain Efron and Carlos Chavez

By Don McPherson, Valley of the Moon Petanque Club

As the crow flies, 25 miles separate two active, historic NorCal clubs, **La Pétanque Marinière** (founded 1972) in San Rafael and **Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club** (founded 1990) in Sonoma. While each is unique, the two clubs have much in common, including sharing a substantial cadre of associate members who belong to both. They also share the treasure of pétanque communities nourished by the creative photography and writing of two prolific philosopher-shutterbugs, Alain Efron at LPM and Carlos Chavez at VOMPC.



### Alain Efron

Paris-born and raised Alain Efron remembers always having a camera. He belonged to a photography club in high school and began developing his own black and white pictures, captivated by “a very mysterious and magic dark room.” After finishing his education, he served two and a half years in the Army, where he practiced and developed a sort of street photography love of secretly taken, candid shots. He recalls that while stationed in North Africa, “I used a little camera under my coat, and I would sneak a picture like a sniper in the shadows when someone is not aware, and they are at their most natural.”



After his discharge, Alain came to the United States in 1962 to work for Xerox, where he had a 35-year career. One might assume that this French-born, accomplished club pétanque player was genetically predisposed to the game and had probably played it since shortly after leaving the cradle. *Mais non!* He knew, of course, that pétanque is the French national pastime and a staple of French culture from daily life to film. But, as he

explained, “if your parents played pétanque, you played pétanque,” and he did not play as a child. For most of his pre-retirement life, he was busy working and pursuing many different sports including especially tennis and cycling. But in 1997, as a still young, vigorous retiree now with time available, he decided to try pétanque with a friend at LPM’s San Rafael terrain.



Alain recalls that his entry as a new player into the active life of LPM was not easy. In the late 90s the active regular players were “old timers, the mostly French and Basque core of the club – bakers, butchers, artisan workers – and the old timers didn’t play with women or beginners.” The men would play on one side of the terrain and women on the other, so he started playing with the women. “Little by little I learned to play the game and got to know people and eventually they invited me to play, and I said OK.” Beginning from that early experience, Alain has championed women players and inclusiveness, and he celebrates that “things have greatly improved.”

After stepping up from regular club play two or three days a week to playing in tournaments, Alain saw the opportunity to combine his new pétanque passion with his life-long love of photography by taking pictures at the end of tournaments of the medal

and prize winners. Quickly this interest morphed into also taking photos during tournament play. He estimates that he has taken over 35,000 pétanque shots, “most of which, of course, have been deleted.”

Alain likes to shoot closeups that reveal the player’s emotion. He likes pointing shots that include the flight of the boule and especially photos of shooting. At tournaments, he tries



to photograph everyone he can. Especially on cloudy days when lighting is best, he likes to shoot in salvo rather than single shots, increasing the chances of capturing a good shot or an interesting change in lighting or action. “He has a discerning eye and captures action shots with great definition,” one appreciative LPM member observed. Another member notes that “his pictures capture an honest portrayal of us and how we can improve our game.” Another member added, “His focus on action shots shows off the styles of play and enjoyment that the players are having in the game and the camaraderie between the players.”

Alain has two favorite cameras. The ‘old standby’ is a digital Canon EOS T7 Rebel which, when fixed with a long-focus lens, becomes his “Big Bertha.” More recently, he’s added a very small, compact digital Panasonic Lumix, “Sneaky Pete,” to his armamentarium, allowing him to hide the camera and take shots when the subject is unaware – the



perfect tool for candid ‘pétanque street photography.’ Regular tournament players will be familiar with seeing Alain assertively standing between terrains aiming and focusing Big Bertha for an action shot as well as with the surprise of suddenly spying him sitting unobtrusively at the far end of the piste holding Sneaky Pete at his chest in anticipation of a candid revelation.



Alain resists any notion of being an official club photographer or historian. He photographs and writes because he loves to do those things and resists accepting a role where he “has to do” those things. Still, he is aware that “if someone doesn’t come to the

tournament, they’re waiting on Monday morning” for the latest blog with his photos. Alain usually has 10 or 12 pictures of each person, an average of 300 photos for a tournament. Over the weekend he spends hours adjusting light, cropping, and reducing the output to about 50 photos to be published on the blog Monday morning.

Alain has served on the LPM Board including as Secretary/Treasurer. A club member with a relatively rare technical background, he introduced email for intra-club communications. Then in 2012, he created a website which soon became the blog “*Au Cochonnet Marin: Pétanque, Photography, French*”

(<https://cochonnetmarin.com>) as a vehicle for publishing and sharing with the club both his photos and his other passion, writing. “He brought our club into the digital age,” long-time LPM president Christine Cragg observed, “using his website to not only report on all of our tournaments but also took photos at every event so he could provide a great slideshow to go along with his report.”

*Au Cochonnet Marin* quickly became the La Pétanque Marinière virtual community, hosting Alain’s reporting of events, his photographs of those events, his thoughts on photography, pétanque, and all things French including regular essays *en français*. With his category “*fourre-tout*” (“a little bit of everything”) he comments on any subject under the sun from politics to world events to culture to love to the vicissitudes of aging, and to the passing from this life of dear friends and colleagues -- literally A to Zed with

**Au Cochonnet Marin**  
Pétanque, Photography, French

**The therapeutic value of a cup of coffee**

November 9, 2024  
Fourre-tout  
Leave a comment

The older you get, the more medication you’re advised to take. Chemistry, it seems, can cure anything. Headache? Take this blue pill. Backache? Here’s a green one. Feeling down? Try this blue pill, that red pill, and, just for good measure, this yellow one.

But, if you’ll pardon my language, the pill pushers have it all wrong! Nothing is more therapeutic than a cup of coffee shared with a friend. Coffee is the secret ingredient that nurtures trust and healing, and we should reach for it more often than for pills.

When you share coffee with a friend, you unconsciously unburden yourself. You exchange confidences you’d never tell a stranger, turning your troubles into something you can laugh at rather than cry over. And it’s mutual—one confidence invites another. By the

**RECENT POSTS**

- **Assisted dying**  
November 22, 2024
- **Frankly, I am baffled...**  
November 15, 2024
- **The future belongs to nerds**  
November 12, 2024
- **The therapeutic value of a cup of coffee**  
November 9, 2024
- **L’été c’est Mort (I am the State)**  
October 23, 2024

**CATEGORIES**

- En français
- Fourre-tout
- Local pétanque clubs
- LPM calendar

generous dashes of irony, pathos, and wit. In one recent month, he posted mini essays reporting on the club *mêlée* tournament and commenting on the U.S. Presidential election, the wonders of iPhone technology, assisted dying, the therapeutic value of a cup of coffee, and the challenges of age-related forgetfulness.

Alain's extraordinary output on the blog since 2012 includes more than 400 multi-part essay entries, all archived on the site as are all his *pétanque* photos. He also has used *Au Cochonnet Marin* to connect LPM club members to the larger *pétanque* community by including links to the LPM website and calendar, the websites of other regional clubs, the website of FPUSA, and the WordPress blog *All About Pétanque*. His blog is effectively a living repository of the history, culture, and community life of La *Pétanque Marinière* in addition to a log of his thoughts and observations on subjects of the times. He's also produced seven themed photo books for members -- and allows that there may be another one "*in the works*."

As one appreciative LPM member summarized, "the time and energy that Alain has put in as a photographer and writer at LPM has been priceless. It can only be described as an act of love."

---

## Carlos Chavez

Carlos Chavez came to photography by way of graphic arts and to writing by way of an artist's empathy for the human condition. Serendipitously, he happened into the 100+ member Valley of the Moon *Pétanque* Club, a club distinguished for hosting major tournaments and especially for organizing daily play. As many as two or three dozen players will be found virtually 365 days a year, rain or shine, in the afternoons and early evenings on its 32-court terrain in Sonoma's Depot Park.



Carlos honed an interest in graphics in high school by working on the yearbook, taking a few pictures but concentrating mostly on design. He left his native Arizona after graduation for a six-year stint in the Navy that included electronics school. "It was when I went into the military that I really started to get into photography because they always had a dark room on base that you could use." He frequently visited friends in Japan when he was stationed in Okinawa: "You could buy really nice photo equipment in Japan, and I learned to develop my own film using the dark room on base." He settled in the Bay Area of Northern California following the last two years of his service assigned

to the Skaggs Island Naval Communications Station north of San Francisco. He had a busy, satisfying professional career as a graphic artist for multiple employers in the North Bay and a fascinating evening hobby life of taking a full menu of dance classes, including Greek folk dancing, and teaching, together with his wife, classes in East and West Coast Swing at the Avenue Ballroom in San Francisco. He loved shooting “the action” in dance pictures and using their negatives “to experiment with screening that got me into techniques of layering with different colors.”

Introduced to pétanque about six years ago by a long-time friend, Carlos found the game and the players to be rich subjects for photographs. He started playing regularly and began shooting pictures in addition to playing. Then he began sending photos out to club members by email, adding researched quotations inspired by one or more of the photos, observations about the game, and reflections on the experience of playing it. With the onset of the Covid pandemic, he began nearly daily email postings “because I thought it might be a way to keep people engaged, to keep us all from drifting away because we couldn’t go to the courts. It kept going from there.”



At least once each “next day,” he posts photos together with apt quotations, bon mots, and philosophical musings on pétanque and life. “What I try to present is not journalism,” he insisted in a post, “it is not, for the record, an accounting of what happens on a daily basis in the park. It is more like a running impressionist painting. I just enjoy shooting



photos and since it's entertaining to me to play with photoshop and play with the images, and add in some thoughts and observations, I thought why not?" Club members universally express their appreciation and anticipation for the daily email from Carlos. "I greatly look forward to his learned musings and obscure quotes," a club member commented, "where does he find the time?" In addition to his focus on daily club play, Carlos also photographs the club's tournaments and events.

As Ansel Adams famously said, "You don't take a photograph, you make it." Carlos is passionate about learning and using editing tools and he enjoys stepping away from reality and making composite photos using images and subjects from multiple different shots. From time to time, he takes a theme for inspiration and has used his graphic arts expertise to make photos of club members as movie posters or record album covers, as photobooth strips or as watercolor paintings. Particularly with themed photos, he has also produced several photo books, largely to give as gifts.

His go-to camera is a Nikon D7100 with a 55-300 zoom. He especially likes to take single shots that feature individual portraits in interesting lighting. On a typical day Carlos might play a game or two and take about 60 shots. He spends several hours in the evening making the handful of photos he will send out the next morning by email and adding the quotations, personal observations, and musings that will make up the day's post.

His posts create and nourish community. "Carlos's photos of pétanque players put a face, personality, and emotion that you wouldn't have with just a name," a past president commented, "we see one another and know one another and get a sense of connection." New players are effectively introduced club-wide through a Carlos photo and identification. A long-time club member commented: "Carlos is the daily mail



that holds us closer as a club. Our chronicler. We know each other better thanks to him.”

Carlos as pétanque player becomes “Everyman” in his posts, openly sharing the full range of emotional highs and lows. As a club member observed: “By being willing to accept the vulnerability of daily opening up his heart and soul with photos, self-deprecating reports of his personal performance, chosen quotes, sometimes whacky fun-poking at the high and mighty and the low and lowly and those on the way up, and those on the way down, and those who are stuck but still play on, Carlos encourages each of us not only to play the game but also to open up, to experience the relationships, and most importantly to appreciate the preciousness of these ordinary moments.”



Carlos sometimes uses the composite photos he makes as the “hook” for observations about the nature of the club itself:

“Walking onto the courts is like stepping into a George Plimpton novel with a full panoply of quirky characters, love affairs, competitive sports, road trips, medical interventions, public and private dinner parties, fist fights and feuds, births and deaths, wishful thinking and delusions of grandeur. There are dog walkers and trash talkers, pot smokers, beer drinkers and wine makers, precision shooters and determined pointers, family men and singles. There are regulars who show up rain or shine and those who wander in and through like comets with multi-year elliptical orbits. They are locals and drop-ins from across borders and oceans. Some show up for work parties, others who wait until the rakes are packed to arrive for play. There are writers and waiters, fishermen and lawyers, musicians and shotgunners, care givers, homeless, artists and plumbers. They work in vineyards, tasting rooms, labs, shops, restaurants, woodsheds and home offices. It is a novel with history and is being written in real time. It is life being lived in a park in a small town that faces both inward and world aware. It is you and me and all that we know and feel and have been and are yet to be, one afternoon at a time.”

As a Board member observed: “His musings are a rich mix of introspection and observation. His regular communications, whether brief reflections and images of the day, or more profound insights, feel like a steady thread, weaving a sense of community among us.”

Another club member summed up the significance of Carlos’s ongoing volunteer contributions to VOMPC and to pétanque: “He has an artist’s open heart and is able to articulate the beauty of life and friendship by linking his photos to elegant prose that finds the sublime in everyday. I’m grateful for his work and his work makes me grateful for the pétanque community and the game itself.”

# News from the Southwest

## The West Coast Cup

By Janice Bissonnette, Fresno Petanque Club



Exciting new things happened in November in the Southwest Region. **Fresno Petanque** Club hosted the West Coast Cup, a tournament modeled after the French Cities Championship. In March of this year, the idea was born as a result of some friendly banter on Facebook between clubs on the East and West Coast. **Emmanuel le Bihan, By Vang** and **Janice Bissonnette** from Fresno joined with **Pierre Constantin** and **Alex Zampieri** from LAPC to hold a club head-to-head challenge on the West Coast. Pierre reached out to **Damien Hureau** for some ideas about how we could use the existing model in France and adapt it to our situation here in the US. The group received commitments from **San Diego, Oakhurst** and **Sactown** that they would send a team to compete, so the idea became a reality.





The first weekend in November, 5 club teams came to Fresno for the two-day event. Each team consisted of 6 players with a minimum of one woman and up to two alternates. Every team competed in Men's and Women's Singles (6 games), Men's and Mixed Doubles (3 games), and Men's and Mixed Triples (2 games) against each opponent club, receiving points for each win. At the end of the two-day period, every player on the team played 12 games.



The weekend was better than anyone could have anticipated. Everyone had fun, enjoyed the ability to play all three formats in one event and the air was filled with friendship and comradery among fellow team members and between clubs. A special thanks to Fresno member **Craig Bigham** for serving as a non-playing tournament director the entire weekend!

The finalists were **1st place LAPC** with a score of 82, **2nd place FPC** with 81 and **3rd place Sactown** with 76. It was anyone's trophy to the very end. This year's winner will be the host of next year's event and the players and teams are already excited about it. Hopefully other regions in the US will embrace the idea, and we could have winners from each region compete. *Are you in??*

# WEST COAST CUP CONTENDERS



**SAN DIEGO**



**FRESNO**



**SACTOWN**



**LOS ANGELES**



**OAKHURST**



Save the Dates! Blossom Trail Open March 22 & 23



**FRESNO PETANQUE CLUB PRESENTS**

*Blossom Trail*

**OPEN**

MARCH | 22-23 | 2025

**SELECT DOUBLES**

MORE INFO TO COME...

*See you there*



## News from the Northeast

### La Boule New Yorkaise

By Kate Brideau

2024 was a year of expansion in the face of loss for La Boule New Yorkaise. Our free lessons, which have expanded from **Bryant Park to Washington Square Park**, are set to grow from one day a week to five next year. Our tournament season was spread out around the City, and included hosting the NE Regional Singles, won by **Joseph Hassoune** (center), with **Damien Fagla second** (left), and **Emile Boujeke in third** (right).

We were proud to host the **Women's Triples World Championship Qualifier** in September, and equally proud to see our member **Kasia Sliz** win with her teammates **Bekah Howe** and **Juanita Celix**. This was a particularly significant tournament for New York, as it marked a shift in the numbers of women playing locally. With new members from our neighbor club **Local 718** showing up to throw, this Women's Qualifier was the biggest turnout in recent memory.





Women's Triples Qualifier Finalist Teams from L to R: (3rd) Alexandra Tisseur, Valerie Hodson-Pujol, & Tish Harris; (2nd) Celia Crittenden, Stacey Linh, & Chrissy Lion; (1st) Juanita Celix, Bekah Howe, & Kasia Sliz; (3rd) Janice Bissonnette, Christine Fadden, & Lisa Skerl

We capped off the LBNY tournament season in early October with the largest US Open the club has held—70 teams coming from 9 countries. At the end of two days of competitive play, the tournament was won by **Dylan Rocher** and his partner **Jean-Pierre Subrenat** (who dedicated his win to **Ernesto Santos**). With the winter upon us, we're looking forward to the 2025 season, and a US Open that will be even bigger, and just as competitive.



US Open 2024

# News from Mid-America

## Carolina Petanque Updates

By Shirley Jones

Since the last newsletter, a very successful **Carolina Open** was held in September. Pictures can be viewed on our [blog spot](#) that **Gary** manages for the club. This blog serves as a historical review of our club since its inception. Pictures can be “borrowed” from there and used elsewhere, as desired. CP held numerous tournaments this year, so there are lots of photos to browse. Enjoy!



### Present and Ongoing Activities

**Hurricane Helene** devastated portions of Western NC with rain, wind, and massive flooding. Reconstruction will continue for years; some towns were almost washed away. Many pétanque players were affected by the storm, experiencing loss of electricity, water, cell service, and septic systems, as well as property damage. Thankfully, there was no loss of life within our membership. Physical damage occurred to the **Celo**, **Asheville**, and **Morganton** courts. Asheville is playing again, and Celo will return soon. Work at Morganton is underway with improvements planned. A few pictures are included here (page 57), but many videos are available online showing the hurricane’s impact. Our members have many stories of their experiences to share. Please keep them and the people of NC in your thoughts.

**Senior Games** - Outdoor and indoor pétanque is projected for inclusion in 2025.

**Indoor Pétanque** is currently played at two locations each week—Morganton and Winston-Salem.

**Alliance Francaise-Raleigh Partnership** - Our partnership with the Alliance has resulted in the construction of four courts at their location, along with opportunities to teach and interact with their members. Many thanks to **Kaye T. and Bob R.**

**Amelia Island Collaboration** - Collaboration with the **Amelia Island Boules Club** and other clubs has helped to facilitate a training clinic with a German coach. Thank you, **Songmi and Bill.**

### Future Goals

- Develop better courts in Charlotte.
- Develop a youth program in Greensboro.
- Coordinate programs with Asheville YMCA for Youth, Young Adults, and Seniors.

- Carolina Pétanque OPEN for Memorial Day Weekend, May 24 & 25, 2025, Select Doubles. Many thanks to Bo Johns and Shannon Hodge for the wonderful years of fun that Zanesfield Pétanque Club has provided.

---

## Save the Dates! Carolina Open May 24 & 25



2024 Carolina Open Champions: Jerry Miller (center) & Fouad Lahnoune (right), pictured with Bill Cooke, President of Carolina Petanque



## Carolina Petanque Strengthens Ties with the Alliance Française

By Kirk Edwards, Carolina Petanque

Carolina Petanque has enjoyed a fruitful partnership with the **Alliance Française** in **Raleigh, North Carolina**, for several years, and the collaboration continues to grow. Together, we established two courts at a local wine bar, where monthly pétanque gatherings have become so popular that demand often exceeds space!

This past October marked an exciting milestone: we built four new courts at the Alliance's beautiful new location and hosted our first tournament there. The event was a resounding success, drawing enthusiastic participation and earning high praise from everyone involved. The Alliance is thrilled with the results and eager to deepen the partnership.



During the tournament, I had an extended conversation with **Claire Barthélemy**, Executive Director of the Raleigh Alliance Française, about expanding this initiative nationwide through the FPUSA. Claire plans to email all Alliance Française chapters

across the country, showcasing the benefits of integrating pétanque into their programs—complete with photos of our successful events.

Even more exciting, Claire will attend the Alliance Française national convention in Seattle next month, where she intends to discuss a potential pétanque partnership with the national organization. The collaboration has proven to be a win-win, and we're excited about the opportunity to bring pétanque to more communities through this national platform!



# Member Highlight: Preston Myers

## Bringing Artistry and Ambassadorship to Carolina Pétanque

By Shirley Jones

Preston became a Tournament Director for Carolina Petanque beginning in 2023 and has continued in that role through 2024.

Being a graphic designer, he has used this talent to create lasting mementos for tournament competitors at the Winston-Salem, NC Petanque facility, his 'home court.'



Everyone receives souvenir magnets, and winners in the Consolante bracket don't go home empty handed; each winner receives a hand-made trophy, which is highly prized. The Mid-America Region Triples tournament included a shooting contest; the top three winners also received a specially made trophy.

As the TD, he also creates all of the competition bracket sheets, communicates with the players, organizes the court clean-up, and strings the courts. And then, he hosts a big cook-out party the day before the competition, making the entire weekend so fun and festive. (picture - Preston on right)



In addition to the trophies, Preston has made a set of unique scoring posts (8) for Winston-Salem and recently made posts (4) for the Greensboro, NC facility. He advertises pétanque on the MeetUp app and has created a business card for the Winston-Salem group and the Classic City Petanque Club with QR codes to share videos introducing people to the sport. Preston is a true ambassador for pétanque and, especially, Carolina Petanque.



# Morganton Courts after Hurricane Helene

---





## Shooting Competition

---

Carolina Petanque held its first competition on Saturday, October 12 in conjunction with a regional tournament. **Preston** made the trophies. Congratulations to the winners, **Laurent, Khalid, and Goyo.**



# Mid-America Regional Mixed Triples Winners



**Gold:** Juan Hernandez, Kathy Cline, Marc Quilici

**Silver:** Kirk Edwards, Bo Edwards, Parker Edwards

**Bronze:** John Wilson, Shannon Hodge, Goyo Martinez



# Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia

By Karen Rankin



Les Boulefrogs Pétanque Club of Virginia members have been busy spreading the word about pétanque! On October 17<sup>th</sup> **Etienne, Bill H. and Mark** presented pétanque to at least 50 attendees at Henrico Park's Department **Annual Health & Fitness Expo**. Of those 50, they also had 12 people play in two demonstration games in the gym with indoor boules that were purchased from **Pétanque America**.

During October, September, and November, **Etienne, Mark, Trish, Bill R, Jeff, Karen and Grace** have taught about 150 French students in various high schools and middle schools in the

Richmond area. Every time we do this, we have great fun. The students are invariably enthusiastic and enjoy themselves. We point out that, as a sport, you don't need to be big, strong, or fast to win.

## Les Boulefrogs Petanque Adventure in La Ciotat, France

Four Boulefrogs ventured to France to, among other things, play pétanque.

**John Hailey, Marcia Hailey, Karen Rankin, and Mark Rankin** landed in Marseille and immediately headed to La Ciotat - the cradle of pétanque. La Ciotat is a beautiful town on the Mediterranean with a fantastic marina. Besides playing pétanque, we enjoyed exploring the town and surrounding areas. We played at the **Boulodrome Jules Le Noir**, which are the exact courts where in June 1910 pétanque was created.



We arranged to meet **Enzo Balbi**, the President of Le Berceau de la Pétanque Jules Le Noir club. He met us with a smile and gave us a tour and some history. He deserves a huge pat on the back for the hard work he does! Merci beaucoup Enzo for the wonderful hospitality!



We came back a day later for their regular concours. We showed up early to practice a bit and try to get a feel for the piste. What a fun surprise it was to meet fellow pétanque adventurers **Albert** and **Caitlin** (left picture below) from the **Petaluma Valley Petanque Club** in California who showed up to practice and play in the concours. We also got to meet **Raymond Ager** who is a lovely Englishman that Karen was also corresponding with before the trip.



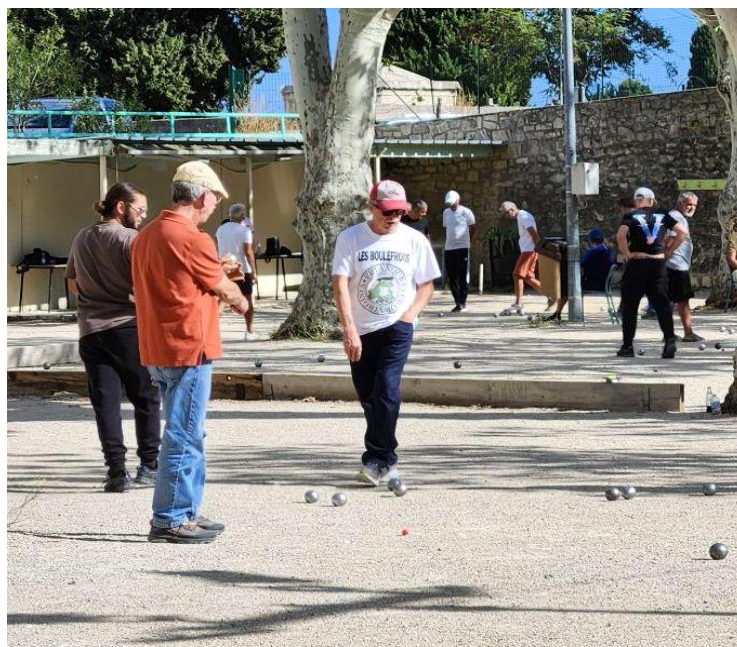


For regular club concours play, they were playing rather higgledy-piggledy in every which direction. Boules were flying through courts and being ignored until they were retrieved after the round. To us, it was a bit chaotic, but it was fun! As far as playing went, John and Mark decided to pair up. Not knowing the terrain, they didn't do as well as they had hoped. Karen played with our new friend, Rachid, and they were able to win second place in the concours.

We played another concours a few days later. Mark was paired with David, and they did well until

their last game. John was paired with JC. They knocked Karen and her partner Tadj out of the concours. Our partners David, JC, and Tadj were gracious, wonderful and a blast to play with! Having drinks with everyone at the club bar after both concours gave us the opportunity to get to know them better, which was one of the highlights of the trip. We met some wonderful people and made some new friends and memories.

We ran into JC a day later while taking a walk. He told us of another club that he was going to play at that afternoon. The tourist website for La Ciotat shows 9 different clubs! Heaven for any pétanque player!



We made a day trip to Marseille to go to **La Maison de la Boule Bleue's** boutique and museum complete with a pétanque court. They are the oldest boule manufacturer in France. We did not come away empty handed!

Of course we ate, drank, and took in all France has to offer when we weren't playing pétanque! We had a wonderful time and highly recommend that if any of you have the chance to visit La Ciotat and Le Berceau de la Pétanque Jules Le Noir to play pétanque - DO IT! They usually host an American/French Tournament after La Mondial Marseillaise à Pétanque in the summer.





## Zanesfield Petanque

By Shannon Hodge

At the end of October, the Zanesfield Pétanque Club hosted its **8<sup>th</sup> annual Ohio Cup** tournament. Although the first-place gold medals went to **Justin Bo Johns** and **Jon Dalmau** who defeated **Loren McCumber** and **Mike Epp** in the final, it was the impressive play of the female juniors' team, **Lucy** and **Ruby Johns**, that made for an exciting day of tourney play. In their semi-final game, these young ladies started off strong with a 7-0 lead before falling to the eventual champions. Keeping their composure, confidence, and strong will to win, despite trailing 7-11 in their third-place game, these savvy sisters scored six points in the last end to secure the victory and earn their third-place medals. Bravo Lucy and Ruby!





Our club enjoys hosting local organizations so that community members can learn more about the game of pétanque and relax and socialize in a peaceful, charming park. In June, the **Mad River Ski Patrol** held their third annual company picnic and pétanque tournament in Zanesfield. Over 100 dedicated volunteers who provide ski and boarding safety at the neighboring Mad River Ski Resort came together with their families for fellowship and fun, playing pétanque in a friendly but competitive tournament. This organization serves our skiing public without charge in the rescue and first aid treatment of injured skiers, and the Zanesfield Pétanque Club is honored to be able to host them every year and to thank them for their service.



In August, we hosted our **8<sup>th</sup> annual Buck-a-Boule tournament**, a Vaclusienne-style contest where teams of one, two, or three players compete against each other. Going undefeated for the day, the doubles team of **Shannon Hodge** and **Loren McCumber** finished in first place. **Iro Arzika** took home the second-place medal, and **Bo** and **Lucy Johns** finished in third.

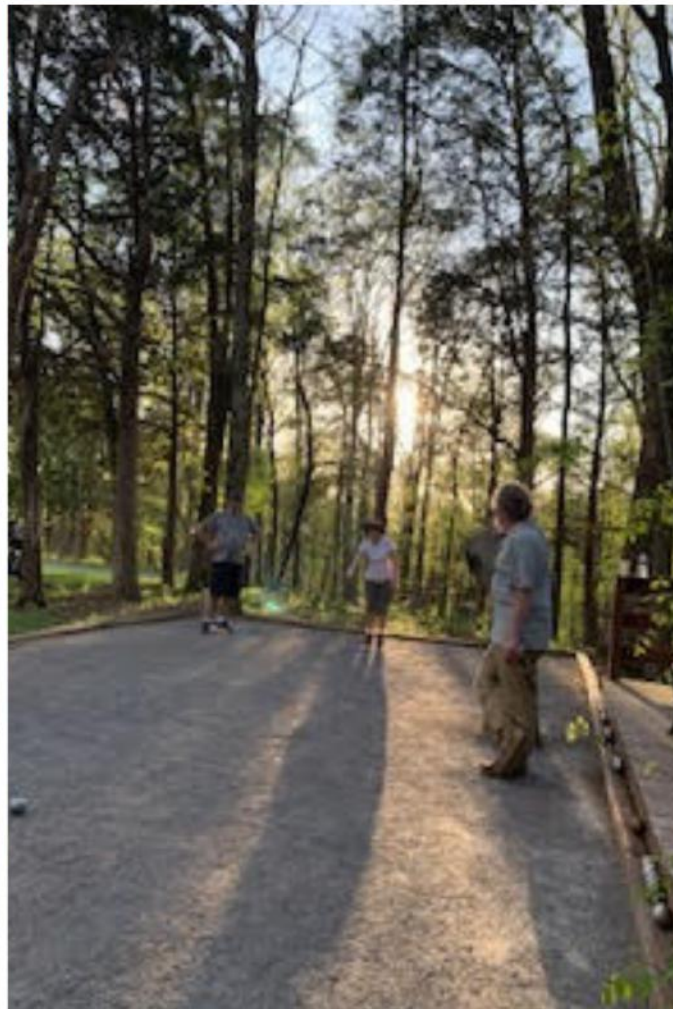


In July, Zanesfield welcomed students from the **American Exchange Project** to their courts. Six local high school grads along with four recent graduates from **Utah, Massachusetts, Wyoming, and California** were part of a first-of-its-kind, totally free summer exchange program which allows high school grads to travel, explore, and learn more about the U.S. from the incredible people and places across the country. As part of their tour, the students were able to stop in Zanesfield and enjoy a few games of pétanque! We look forward to hosting their group again next summer!



# Bell Buckle Petanque Club

From dawn to dusk, indoors or out, they toss their boules and share a shout.



# News from the Northwest



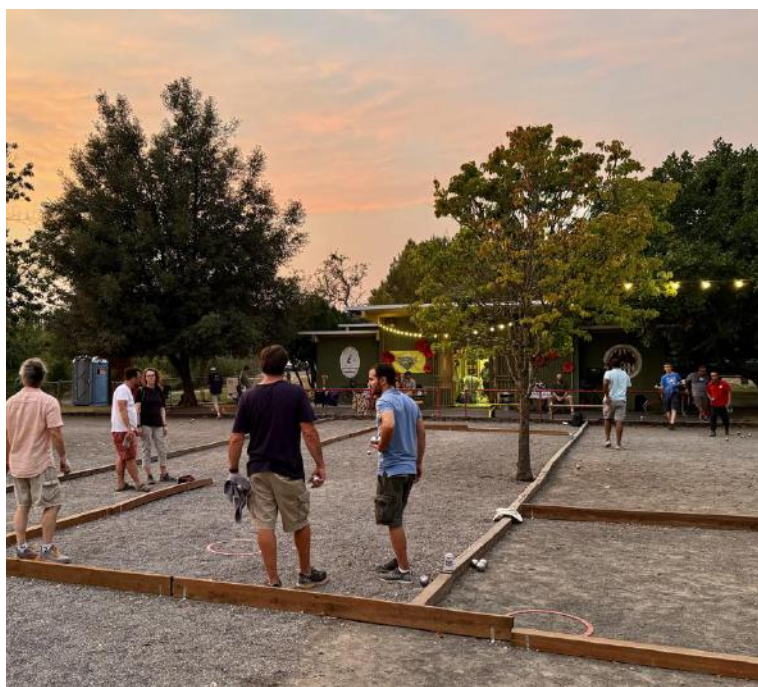
## Portland's Rose City Open "Fun Train" Delivers: Reflections from a Rookie Conductor

By Neil Bastian

I wasn't planning to take over the leadership of this year's Rose City Open in September. But as the story goes, despite my intent to play a supportive role, I accepted the challenge as a way to give back to a club and sport that has given me so much.

So, I made myself an espresso and thought hard... our RCO needed sumptin'. Attendance had waned since COVID, and the growing number of tournaments intensified the "competition" for players. Another concern was our terrain, which had become rather "threadbare" over the years and needed a facelift.

With a plan in hand, I fired up the RCO "Fun Train," blew my whistle, and set out to create some fun... even if it killed me. I



quickly gathered a team of talented, dedicated volunteer leaders and headed to the nearest landscaping yard. Thanks to a massive volunteer effort, some heavy equipment, and plenty of Ben-Gay, our courts were transformed - updated and groomed with various surface types to reflect current trends.

### Tournament Highlights

Fortunately, the forecasted heat subsided. We filled our roster, and despite a few IT glitches, the RCO Fun Train ran smoothly and on time.

We had many familiar, top-tier favorites on board. Even more impressive was the number of new faces: **Wilfred** from Texas, **Joel** from Ft. Bragg, **Cheetah**, an exchange student from Thailand, **Chris** from Florida, and **Keogh** and **La Singkeo** from Seattle, to name a few. All in all, we had a diverse and good-natured field ready to bring their A-game.

After two days of competition, it was time to grab a chair and enjoy the playoffs. In the Concours A semifinals, **Roland Rakotondramanana** (Sactown) and **Mamy Ranaivoson** (Zanesfield) ousted **Kham Chounlamany** (Fresno) and **Chan Xiong** (Sactown), while **Ziggy Kessouagni** (Zanesfield) and **PJ Mallette** (PPC) dashed the hopes of **Pascal Tisseur** (PPC) and **Tom Nguyen** (San Diego).

Before a sizable crowd, these two A-list finalists squared off in what turned out to be a long, closely fought, crowd-pleasing game. Unfortunately for Team Ziggy/PJ, a few costly errors late in the game were all Team Roland/Mamy needed to secure their place atop the podium, taking home both gold and glory!



Ziggy throwing with precision

In the Concours B finals, **Tish Harris** (Oakhurst) and **Alexandra Tisseur** (PPC) emerged victorious in another well-played match against **Wilfried Afopa** (TX) and **Ray Soucie** (PPC). Finally, the Consolante was dominated by **Jeff Brann** and **Mark Richards** from Seattle, whose disappointing play on Saturday seemed to have inspired their Sunday tear through to the top, cruising to victory over **Jen Sliker** (PPC) and **May Singthayom** (LAPC) in the finals.



RCO Champions: Roland Rakotondramanana (R) and Mamy Ranaivoson (L)

## Socials, Raffles, and BBQ - Oh My!



Friday's event at the club had a party atmosphere, complete with decorations, string lights, playlists, a carnival-like shooting contest, and, of course, a tasty homemade feast.

Many of our guests loosened up as they familiarized themselves with our terrain, while others caught up or exchanged introductions. Our own **Wally Peppel** pulled out a last-minute victory in the shooting event, earning himself some cool cash and a free pass to next year's RCO.

When the dinner bell rang, everyone clamored inside as the kitchen crew served up pulled pork sliders, bacon-filled mac and cheese, various salads, and platters of cheese. **Isabelle Agnesse** made her famous pâté, while **Pascal Tisseur**, our resident professional pastry chef, kept us well-supplied all weekend with boxes of fine pastries. It all made for happy, lip-smacking bellies. I was told things wrapped up later than sooner.



Saturday's social at the local brewery, **Gigantic**, was a hit. Perhaps it was the free beer secured by **Jen Sliker**, or maybe it was just the joy of having a nearby, welcoming venue to relax and sip some suds while recounting the day's highlights.

During our tournament lunch breaks, everyone gathered for another chance to win. **Wally**, our perennial raffleteur, led the action as many lucky ticket holders walked away with nifty prizes, including sets of indoor boules (courtesy of **Petanque America**), a wine tasting for four, unique Rose City-themed gift baskets, and, of course, some cash!

Finally, on Sunday afternoon, our resident grill master **Romi** enticed the crowd to stay and watch the finals by serving up delicious BBQ chicken hot off the grill. It worked! We added a quick shot of pastis to toast the finalists and let the game begin!

### Last Stop

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who helped make our weekend such a success. I thoroughly enjoyed serving as your host “conductor,” and on behalf of PPC, we hope to see you on board next year’s RCO Fun Train. You can find additional 2024 RCO photos on our [Facebook page](#).

---



# Floating String Lines: A Solution to Tripping Hazards

By Joe Cortright, Portland Petanque Club

There's a safety menace on many petanque courts: string lines can easily become trip-wires when players aren't paying attention, or simply don't just lift their feet. Over the past year, at the Portland Petanque Club, we have had two of our players injured by falls from tripping over string lines.



We've been looking for a solution to improve safety. We've tried chalk lines (they're less sharp, are quickly erased and wash away in the all-too-common Portland rain). We've also tried stapling down string lines - but this doesn't make them less of a trip hazard.

This fall, for the Rose City Open, we hit on a new solution: floating string lines. By "floating" we mean that the string lines are firmly attached at one end, but left loose at the other. The loose end is passed under another string line, and usually between two nails. We make sure there is an extra two feet or so of line at the "loose" end. If the line is kicked, the string gives--effectively eliminating the trip hazard.



It's a simple matter to tug on the extra line at the "loose" end to restore the string line to its correct position.

---



---

Some players were concerned that loose lines would lead to close calls as to whether boules were "in" or "out." In practice, that hasn't been a problem. We make an announcement at the beginning of competitions that players may, between plays, tighten lines to assure they are in the correct position.

We use these new floating lines for all of the "interior" lines between courts. These are the lines that seem most likely to catch people unawares and are the primary trip hazard. Our exterior lines (which are adjacent to the stone wall around our courts, or the raised boards that separate playing areas, are secured at both ends (and usually at the borders of each court). Generally, pétanque is a safe sport, but we can make it safer. As you prepare for your tournaments in the coming months, consider trying out "floating" strings for your court layout.

# Mental Strategies for Enhancing Pétanque Performance

By Philippe Geraud, Seattle Petanque Club

*“The greatest breakthrough in performance enhancement in the next century will be in the mental game.”*

– Lanny Bassham, Olympic Gold Medalist & Founder of Mental Management Systems

In competitive sports, the importance of mental strategies is widely recognized, yet they remain underutilized in pétanque. While we spend countless hours perfecting our throwing techniques and strategies, we often overlook the power of mental preparation. As top athletes and coaches worldwide acknowledge, mental training can be the difference between a good player and a great one.



Philippe staying focused

## Why Mental Training Matters in Pétanque

Just like in any sport, the path to peak performance in pétanque starts with physical mastery. Once your throwing and shooting techniques become automatic, mental training allows you to refine your game. Scientific research shows that visualization and mental practice activate the same areas of the brain as physical performance, reinforcing skills and improving execution.

So why isn't mental training more common in pétanque? Sport psychology, the study of how mental factors influence performance, is a relatively new field, and it has only recently gained widespread acceptance. Even today, many athletes rely heavily on physical training while neglecting mental strategies. However, studies show that high-level athletes consistently incorporate mental skills into their routine to maintain focus and enhance their game.

## The Importance of Visualization

Visualization, or mental rehearsal, is one of the most powerful tools available to athletes. By mentally picturing yourself executing perfect throws - whether it's pointing or

shooting - you engage the same parts of the brain that are active during physical play. This process not only strengthens muscle memory but also builds confidence and reduces anxiety before competition. To make visualization most effective, practice it during training sessions and immediately before matches. The more vivid and detailed the imagery, the more likely it is to translate into improved performance.

Many elite athletes use visualization to mentally rehearse successful outcomes. By vividly seeing and feeling themselves winning, they prepare their mind and body to perform at their best. For pétanque players, this could involve visualizing the perfect shot, seeing the boule land exactly where it should, and feeling the satisfaction of a successful throw. Regular practice of this technique can make it a crucial part of your preparation routine.



Damien following through

---

### Setting Effective Goals

Another key mental strategy is goal setting. While many players focus on outcome goals, such as winning a tournament, sport psychologists advise breaking these down into performance and process goals. Performance goals target specific skills, like consistently hitting the target boule from 10 meters. Process goals focus on the mental and physical steps required to achieve these skills, such as practicing visualization or deep breathing before each throw.

By setting clear, attainable goals, you create a roadmap for improvement. Pétanque players, for example, can set a goal to hit six boules in a row at a set distance without missing. This type of focused practice helps build confidence and keeps you on track for larger goals.

---

### Staying Focused Under Pressure

In competition, maintaining focus can be challenging, especially when distractions abound. External distractions, such as noise or weather, can disrupt your concentration. Internal distractions - like self-doubt or overthinking - can also interfere with your game.

One strategy for staying focused is learning to embrace the environment. Instead of fighting distractions, accept them and remain centered on your performance. For instance, in a noisy tournament setting, instead of worrying about the noise, you can focus solely on your breathing or the feel of the boule in your hand. By sharpening your focus on what you can control, you diminish the impact of external factors.

Top athletes often describe being “in the zone,” a state of extreme focus where distractions fade away and everything feels effortless. This sensation can be experienced in pétanque, too, especially when your mind is fully immersed in the game. Training your focus, through mindfulness or other techniques, can help you reach this heightened state more consistently.

---

### Managing Anxiety and Stress

Contrary to popular belief, anxiety isn't always harmful. In fact, many top athletes use their anxiety as a source of energy and motivation. The key is learning to view anxiety as a positive force rather than something that will hinder performance. When properly managed, the adrenaline and excitement that come with anxiety can actually sharpen your focus and improve your performance.



Sandra displaying calmness

In pétanque, where games can be won or lost by a single throw, the ability to stay calm under pressure is vital. One effective technique for managing stress is controlled breathing. Deep, slow breaths help regulate your heart rate, reduce tension, and clear your mind before important throws.

---

### Proven Techniques for Success

Sport psychologists use various methods to help athletes achieve peak performance. Among the most effective for pétanque players are:

1. Goal-setting strategies: As mentioned earlier, break down large goals into smaller, actionable steps. This will help you stay focused and motivated.
2. Controlled breathing and relaxation: Before taking a critical shot, practice deep breathing to calm your nerves and reduce muscle tension.
3. Progressive muscle relaxation: This technique involves alternating between tensing and relaxing different muscle groups, which helps increase body awareness and reduce tension during stressful moments.

4. Focusing exercises: Techniques like mindfulness, where you focus entirely on the present moment, can help prevent distractions and keep your mind clear.
5. Visualization: Regular mental rehearsal of successful throws will reinforce physical skills and boost your confidence during competition.

By incorporating these mental strategies into your practice routine, you'll not only improve your focus and consistency but also gain a mental edge over your competitors.

---

## Final Thoughts

Pétanque players, like all athletes, can benefit immensely from mental training. Whether it's through visualization, goal setting, or learning to manage anxiety, these strategies help fine-tune both your mental and physical game. While physical skill is crucial, it's often the players who are mentally prepared that perform best when the pressure is on.

Next time you step onto the terrain, remember that your mind can be just as powerful a tool as your boule. With the right mental strategies, you can elevate your performance and find yourself winning more often and more consistently.



Hendrick and Tim demonstrating synchronized mental effort



## A Unique Pétanque Journey to France: A Conversation with Angie Gleason

By Michelle Dang, Sactown Petanque

I recently had the pleasure of spending time with Angie Gleason (right), a former history professor turned pétanque enthusiast (with impressive FPUSA titles under her belt), whose life has undergone a remarkable transformation since she first picked up a boule nearly a decade ago. A long-time member of the Maine Boules Club, Angie has gone from playing on the courts of New England to immersing herself in the heart of pétanque culture in France. From that first game to a full-time life abroad, Angie's journey is a fascinating one. And now, she's bringing others along for the ride through her all-inclusive pétanque holiday tours.



**Michelle:** Angie, your story is incredible. From medieval history professor to pétanque holiday tour operator - it's not exactly a traditional career pivot. How did this all begin?

**Angie:** It's been quite a journey. My love for pétanque started almost accidentally. About ten years ago, after some coaxing, I played a game on a beautiful fall day in New England. I wasn't sure what to expect at first, I'd never played anything like it, but I quickly realized how much fun it was. I still remember the day like it was yesterday. I didn't know at the time how much it would change my life.

**Michelle:** And so what inspired you to leave your career in academia and make the leap to living in France?

**Angie:** A combination of things, really. My academic interests always revolved around sports and games - I even wrote my dissertation on entertainment in early medieval society and taught a college course on the history of sport for 15 years. But pétanque brought something personal into the mix. I met my husband through the game, and after realizing that moving to France was inevitable, I started to think about ways to incorporate my love for pétanque into my new life there.

**Michelle:** And that's where the idea for pétanque holiday tours came in?

**Angie:** Exactly. During the pandemic, I had a lot of time to reflect. I thought about how challenging it is for pétanque enthusiasts like me to travel to France and really immerse themselves in the game, especially if they don't speak the language. I thought, *Why not create an experience where people can enjoy pétanque and discover the beauty of France at the same time?*



Angie's husband, Marco Foyot (right), with Michel Baudouin, co-owner of Petanque America and Caroline Petanque member, in Aix-en-Provence's historic Parc Jourdan



**Michelle:** That's such a great idea. Tell me about the tours - what can people expect?

**Angie:** The tours are designed to be immersive and customizable. Guests will stay in handpicked, often historical accommodations, eat and drink the local cuisine, play and learn with French champions, and even participate in tournaments. We'll also explore French culture - visiting wineries, castles, museums, and even boule factories. It aims to be a perfect blend of pétanque and the essence of France.

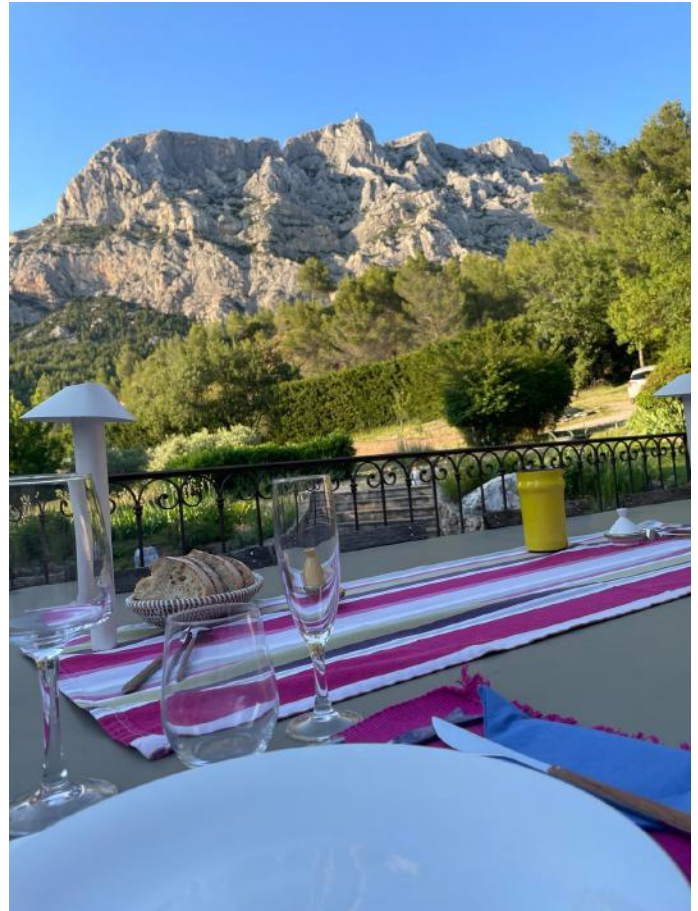
**Michelle:** It sounds like an unforgettable experience. When do the tours begin?

**Angie:** We've been working with Michel Baudouin and a group from Carolina Petanque for the first tours in spring 2025. Those dates are already full, but we still have availability in September and October 2025. I'm excited to welcome and spend time with people who are passionate about pétanque or just curious about experiencing France in a unique way.

**Michelle:** It's such an inspiring project, Angie. How can people learn more or join you on this adventure?

**Angie:** Anyone interested can reach out to [bouletours@gmail.com](mailto:bouletours@gmail.com). I'd love to hear from anyone who's interested to answer questions and hear what excites them most about pétanque or exploring France.

**Michelle:** Thank you, Angie, for sharing your passion and inspiring journey - I'm sure many will be excited to join you in experiencing the magic of pétanque and the beauty of France.



Angie living the pétanque dream in France



# US Juniors and Women's Triples Teams (2025)

---

*Congratulations to the Teams!* The Juniors Championship will take place in Canada. The location for the Women's Triples World Championship will be announced in the coming months.



## GIRLS' TEAM

*Ruby Johns (L) and Lucy Johns (R) (Zanesfield Petanque)*



## BOYS' TEAM

*Elijah Mullican (L) and Caleb Mullican (R) (Amelia Island Boules Club)*



## WOMEN'S TEAM

*Juanita Celix (L) (Seattle)  
Bekah Howe (C) (Port Townsend)  
Kasia Sliz (R) (LBNY)*

# 2024 FPUSA Regional Results

---

## Northeast

### Select Singles:

**Gold - Joseph Hassoune**

Silver - Damien Fagla

Bronze - Emile Boujeke

### Select Doubles:

**Gold: Joseph Hassoune & Houari Baba**

Silver: Emile Boujeke & Dawan Sangasri

Bronze: Eminou M'Boirick & Sawyer Rioux

## Mid-America

### Women's Singles:

**Gold - Honor Woodard**

Silver - Tracie Jeffries

Bronze - Kristy Anderson

### Men's Singles:

**Gold - Juan Aymerich**

Silver - Juan Hernandez

Bronze - Mamy Ranaivoson

### Select Singles:

**Gold - Roland Rakotondramanana**

Silver - Ibrahim Arzika

Bronze - Kirk Edwards

### Women's Doubles:

**Gold - Kathy Cline & Tracie Jeffries**

Silver - Bo Edwards & Shannon Hodge

Bronze - Tina Currie & Shirley Jones

### Mixed Doubles:

**Gold - Raymond Nielsen & Erika Nielsen**

Silver - Lori Beth Creasy & Mamy Ranaivoson

Bronze - Bo Edwards & Kirk Edwards

### Select Doubles:

**Gold: Argentina Lamas & Roland**

**Rakotondramanana**

Silver: Noah Hertert & Eric Hertert

Bronze: Marc Quilici & Juan Hernandez

### Select Triples:

**Gold: Kathy Cline, Juan Hernandez, & Marc Quilici**

Silver: Mike House, Mourhite Louali, & Tracie Jeffries

Bronze: Holly Israel, Robin Harvey, & Jesse Israel

### Mixed Triples

**Gold: Juan Hernandez, Kathy Cline, & Marc Quilici**

Silver: Kirk Edwards, Bo Edwards, Parker Edwards

Bronze: John Wilson, Shannon Hodge, Goyo Martinez

## Southeast

### Mixed Doubles:

**Gold - Songmi Keating & Fouad Lahnoune**

Silver - Tom Kane & Gail Hawkins

Bronze - Stacey Linh & Alex Canesse

### Women's Doubles

**Gold - Linda Coté & Jo Ella Manalan**

Silver - Stacey Linh & Claudia Nicolas

Bronze - Martine Charbonneau & Francine Claveau

### Men's Doubles

**Gold - Christian Coté & Jacques Dion**

Silver - Alex Canesse & Stefan Nicolas

Bronze - Axel Cazenave & Christian Cazenave

### Men's Triples:

**Gold - Juan Garcia, Juan Aymerich, & Raymond Nielsen**

Silver - Jerry Miller, Christian Cazenave, & Frederic Penaranda

Bronze - Jose Polo, Hassan Lakhdar, & Fouad Lahnoune

(SE continued)

**Select Triples:**

**Gold - Fouad Lahnoune, Kaye Norris, & Hassan Lakhdar**

Silver - Juan Garcia, Juan Aymerich, & Raymond Nielsen

Bronze - Stefan Nicolas, Claudia Nicolas, & Jerome Nicolas

**Select Doubles:**

**Gold - Jerome Nicolas & Stefan Nicolas**

Silver - Stacey Linh & Alex Canesse

Bronze - Chris Tripoul & Juan Aymerich

**Mixed Triples:**

**Gold -Lori Beth Creasy, Larry Creasy, & Frosty Sabo**

Silver - Shirley Jones, John Wilson, & Goyo Martinez

Bronze - Raymond Nielsen, Juan Aymerich, & Karla Orozco

## Southwest

**Select Doubles:**

**Gold - Emmanuel le Bihan & Alexandre Zampieri**

Silver - Kham Chounlamany & Chan Xiong

Bronze - By Vang & Pao Moua

## NorCal

**Select Singles:**

**Gold -Wolfgang Kurz**

Silver - Kham Chounlamany

Bronze - Kevin Evoy

**Select Triples:**

**Gold - By Vang, Kham Chounlamany, & Janice Bissonnette**

Silver - Yor Lee, Mone Lee, & Neng Lee

Bronze - Wolfie Kurz, Kevin Evoy, & Ed Porto

**Men's Singles:**

**Gold - Hamid El Qarei**

Silver - Bee Moua

Bronze - Mark Shirkey

**Women's Singles:**

**Gold - May (Ubol) Singthayom**

Silver - Erin McTaggart

Bronze - Suzie Lee

**Mixed Doubles:**

**Gold - Kham Chounlamany & Michelle Dang**

Silver - Tom Lee & Suzie Lee

Bronze - Peter Mathis & Barbara Hall

**Mixed Triples:**

**Gold - By Vang, Kham Chounlamany, & Janice Bissonnette**

Silver - Tom Lee, Yor Lee, & Suzie Lee

Bronze - Mone Lee, Chan Xiong, & Michelle Dang

**Select Doubles:**

**Gold: Mone Lee & Kue Lee**

Silver: Chan Xiong & Wolfie Kurz

Bronze: Hans Kurz & Ashlee Dencklau

**Men's Doubles:**

**Gold: Yor Lee & Kue Lee**

Silver: Damien Monnet & Patrick Vaslet

Bronze: Peter Mathis & Peter Coughlin

**Men's Triples:**

**Gold: Emmanuel le Bihan, By Vang, & Kham Chounlamany**

Silver: Peter Mathis, Wolfgang Kurz, & PJ Mallette

Bronze: Damien Monnet, Kue Lee, & Christophe Sarafian

## Northwest

**Select Doubles:**

**Gold: Alexandra Tisseur & Emmanuel le Bihan**

Silver: Pascal Tisseur & Kham Chounlamany

Bronze: (tie) Michael Stasack & Marshal Livingstone / Gregg Hodge & Lounis Zemmouri

**Women's Singles:**

**Gold: Bekah Howe**

Silver: Jen Sliker

Bronze: Alexandra Tisseur

**Men's Singles:**

**Gold: Lounis Zemmouri**

Silver: Emmanuel le Bihan

Bronze: Philippe Geraud

# 2024 FPUA National & Qualifier Results

---

## Nationals

### Women's Singles

**Gold - Kasia Sliz (La Boule New Yorkaise)**

Silver - Dawan Sangarsi (La Boule New Yorkaise)

Bronze - Michelle Healy (San Antonio Petanque Club)

### Men's Singles

**Gold - Emile Boujeke (La Boule New Yorkaise)**

Silver - Christian Cazenave (South Florida)

Bronze - Kham Chounlamany (Fresno)

### Mixed Triples

**Gold - Raymond Nielsen (Ohlala), Juan Aymerich (Tampa Boules), & Karla Orozco Torres (Tampa Boules)**

Silver - Stefan Nicolas (South Florida), Jerome Nicolas (South Florida), & Claudia Nicolas (South Florida)

Bronze - Christian Cazenave (South Florida), Axel Cazenave (South Florida), & Jade Cazenave (South Florida)

### Women's Doubles

**Gold - Tracie Jeffries & Kathy Cline (Carolina Petanque)**

Silver - Tina Lamas & Kristy Anderson (Atlanta Petanque)

Bronze: Michelle Healy (San Antonio) & Honor Woodard (Chattooga Boules)

### Men's Doubles

**Gold - Raymond Nielsen (Ohlala) & Juan Aymerich (Tampa Boules)**

Silver - Alex Canesse (Tampa Boules) & Stefan Nicolas (South Florida)

Bronze - Kham Chounlamany (Fresno) & Emmanuel le Bihan (Fresno)

### Mixed Doubles

**Gold - Marc Quilici & Kathy Cline (Carolina Petanque)**

Silver - Raymond Nielsen & Erika Nielsen (Ohlala)

Bronze - Kathy Ragan (Nelson Ranch Petanque) & Neal Linhart (Dallas Petanque)

### Men's Triples

**Gold - Frederic Penaranda (Ohlala), Fouad Lahnoune (Amelia Island) & Hassan Lakhdar (Tampa Boules)**

Silver - Jerome Nicolas, Stefan Nicolas & Fabian Nicolas (South Florida)

Bronze - Jerry Miller (Amelia Island), Raymond Neilsen (Ohlala), Ziggy Kessouagni (Zanesfield)

## World Championship Qualifiers

### Men's Doubles

**Gold - Franck Brousse (Los Angeles) & Gilles Speter (San Diego)**

Silver - PJ Mallette (Portland) & Emile Boujeke (LBNY)

Bronze - Nouredine Boutissiant & Youssef Ourbaati (Zanesfield)

Bronze - Silas Holm (Port Townsend) & Christophe Sarafian (Sactown)

### Women's Doubles

**Gold - Bekah Howe (Port Townsend) & Michelle Dang (Sactown)**

Silver - Suzie Lee & Krystal Pulsipher (Sactown)

Bronze - Janice Bissonnette (Fresno) & Christine Fadden (Port Townsend)

Bronze - Rebecca Runze (Los Angeles) & Kaya Wiant (Local 718)

### Women's Triples

**Gold - Bekah Howe (Port Townsend), Kasia Sliz (LBNY), & Juanita Celix (Seattle)**

Silver - Stacey Linh (Tampa Boules), Celia Crittenden (Portland), & Chrissy Lion (Los Angeles)

Bronze - Janice Bissonnette (Fresno), Christine Fadden (Port Townsend), & Lisa Skerl (LBNY)

Bronze - Tish Harris (Oakhurst), Alexandra Tisseur (Portland), & Valerie Hodson-Pujol (Las Vegas)

# In Memoriam



# Paul Yang

1970 - 2024

Fresno Petanque Club



Always a smile as he walked on the court - that was Paul Yang (left in photo with Chia Vang, and Jer Thao). He left us this year earlier than he should have, but his presence on the court will remain, especially at Cary Park.

Paul joined the club in 2008 and was an avid competitor. He won Regional, National and Qualifier events and was the finalist in many Open tournaments, including top 8 in Amelia Island. He was a member of the Fresno Petanque Club Board, serving as President and Vice President for several years. Paul was selected by his peers to be coach for many of the FPUSA Men's &

Women's Doubles, Women's Triples and Junior World Championship teams from 2017 until 2023.

Paul was a spiritual person, with a strong faith. His family and church were the center of his life when he was off the court. He also enjoyed tending to his garden and caring for the animals that the family raised. He was always taking pictures to share with friends and family of all the things he loved to do. Paul introduced the game to his longtime Doubles and Triples partner Jer and several of the other Fresno Hmong players when he was manager of an apartment complex. That was probably his biggest contribution to our sport, his outgoing personality and willingness to talk to any passer-by about the game he loved, put a boule in their hand and teach them how to play.



*"Paul and I enjoyed playing together with you, our pétanque family. We will miss you Paul and I will forever cherish our times together" - Jer Thao*

# Jean-Claude Etallaz

1943 - 2024

Lamorinda Petanque Club

Jean-Claude was affectionately known as "Minou" to his beloved wife Minette (Genevieve) and friends. As a multi-generational French pastry chef, Minou's skills and adventurous spirit led him and Minette on a global culinary odyssey. Before finally settling in Northern California, Minou worked in Switzerland, England, Canada, The Bahamas, Chicago, and Palm Desert. Throughout his career, Minou was renowned for creating truly spectacular pastries, and his gift of homemade liquors became a cherished tradition.

In 1977, Minou's love for pétanque turned into community leadership when he founded a pétanque club in San Mateo, California called La Boule Joyeuse, serving as its President. His dedication to the sport was evident in the meticulously kept binders filled with flyers from every pétanque event he ever attended, spanning several decades and carefully preserved in plastic sleeves.



Minou's enthusiasm for pétanque never waned. He was an active member of La Petanque Marinier for several decades and later a member of Lamorinda Petanque. Minou's indomitable spirit for pétanque shone through when he competed in the Wine Country Open in April 2024, even while undergoing treatment for cancer. Minou and Minette's bond was strengthened through their shared love of pétanque, often enjoying outings together on the court.

Beyond the kitchen and the pétanque court, Minou was an avid fisherman and loved to swim. He was able to return to France one last time and reunited with his family before he passed. Minou will be deeply missed by all who knew him.



## Mike Lee

1968 - 2024  
Sactown Petanque

Mike was a beloved and accomplished pétanque player in Northern California, known for his exceptional skill and quiet focus during competitions - "Quiet Mike." Over the years, he had won numerous FPUSA titles, making him one of the best players in the region. Mike was a rare player who was equally adept at pointing and shooting and very formidable in singles. Within Sactown, it was a well-known fact that if Mike was your partner, you would most likely win. His joy on the courts was infectious - he was always laughing and radiating happiness while playing the game he loved. Mike was deeply generous with his

time and talents as he mentored many club members and genuinely wanted to see them succeed, even if it meant beating him. He was also a constant presence when help was needed for court clean-up. Mike will be especially remembered for his advocacy that resulted in Parks & Rec creating pétanque courts at Florin Creek Park. Because of Mike's dedication, members who live near Florin Creek now get to enjoy pétanque close to home. He was also a founding member of Sactown Petanque.



Outside of pétanque, Mike cherished time with his family. Whether on camping trips or during celebrations of his Hmong heritage, Mike's love for his family was boundless. He also loved to sing! Mike's life journey was remarkable - he met his wife in a refugee camp in Thailand, and together they built a life full of love, creating a family that now includes grandchildren. Mike died unexpectedly of a cardiac event on March 25, 2024, a few days after a fun evening at the courts - joking and throwing boules. He is deeply missed by his family and friends. The courts haven't been the same without Mike.





## Rosalie Marcovecchio

La Pétanque Marinière

Rosalie passed away on May 27, 2024. A mother, grandmother, wife, retired lawyer, writer and lover of all things French; Rosalie was a cherished member of our petanque family.

It was her appreciation for France and the French culture that caused her to find and join LPM. While she was not able to play regularly over the past couple of years, she was always a charming, fun-loving fixture at our social events. She will be remembered and missed.

---



## Alex Penate

South Florida Petanque Club

Alex was a club member of SFPC for the last 4 years, passed away from cancer on July 30, 2024.

From the moment he was introduced to pétanque, he became passionate about the game, practicing all the time and developing into a good player.

He was a joy to be around, friendly and helpful, and we will miss him a lot.



Pierre (left) & Marc (front right)

## Pierre Lallinec

South Florida Petanque Club

Pierre had been a member of SFPC since the club's creation. He retired from active play a few years ago, but came out regularly to spectate and visit with friends. Pierre was well into his nineties when he passed away this summer. May he rest in peace.

---

## Marc Vedrines

South Florida Petanque Club

If there was ever a kinder and gentler man than Marc Vedrines, we don't know who that could be. He passed away in October and left a hole in our hearts. Marc was a superb pétanque player and everyone wanted to be on his team. His sportsmanship was impeccable, and he will be sorely missed by a wide pétanque community.

---

## Edel Bahr

Port Townsend Petanque Alliance



Edel Bahr was always happy, eager to play, and had a contagious sense of humor. She actively participated in club events for several years with enthusiasm for the game, and of course attended the PTPA's "Girl's Night Out" where she engaged us in stories about her childhood in Germany and moving to the US to start a career and later a family. Our club enjoyed Edel's sense of pleasure playing Petanque, her genuine kindness and friendliness was always appreciated. Edel regularly shared a positive outlook regarding a sport that was fairly new to her; continuously utilizing skills to enhance her teammate's ability to come away with a win.

# Tony Quinteros

Port Townsend Petanque Alliance

Tony Quinteros gained notoriety in our club as “Tony the Tape” due to his quick ability to spot which boule was closest to the jack. More often than not, he was spot on; however, accepted our teasing with good sportsmanship and laughter. To improve his game, he played almost daily after finishing his 8-hour shift at work. Tony will be remembered for his natural ability to welcome players from other clubs, and quickly adapt to different personalities. He was especially supportive of new players teaching them skills, game strategies, and learning the sport of pétanque. He loved teaming up to play in every kind of pétanque event- whether at the club, in FPUSA tournaments, or at a big Open. He was well respected by all who knew him.

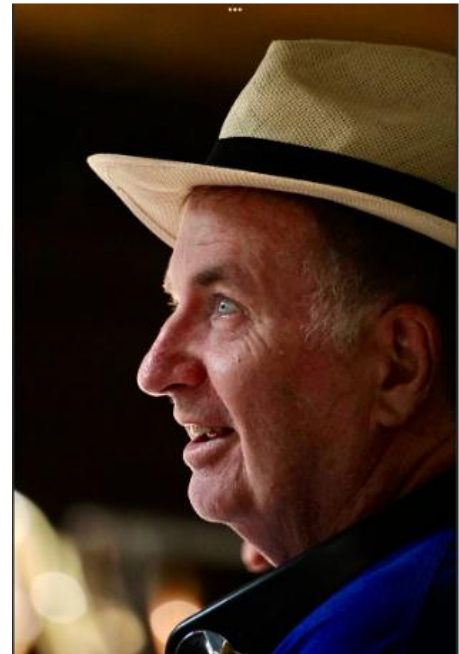


---

# Dick Pollard

Carolina Petanque

Dick was 71 years old when he passed away; sadly within 3 weeks of celebrating his 47<sup>th</sup> anniversary with his wife, Dawn. Dick loved playing pétanque. And he loved visiting with his pétanque family while playing and watching. He was also “*the best dog sitter*” around. According to Dawn, Dick had a rapidly progressive version of a rare neuromuscular disease called corticobasal ganglionic degeneration. He is missed by everyone who knew him.



# Michel Claude Cardon

Los Angeles Petanque Club



After being diagnosed with an advanced brain tumor in April 2024, Michel passed away on May 25, 2024. Michel, a bundle of energy even in his 80s, loved pétanque. His trademark saying, “*here...here, my foot... my foot,*” showing his teammates exactly and exuberantly where to play their boules, will ring in many ears for years to come. Vance Gerdau said he met Michel in 1990 when he had just retired as the executive chef from the Beverly Hills Hotel. Together with Marcel and Pierre Metzoiian, Michel took Vance, Bob Abrams and Ken Merfeld, the first

Americans at LAPC, under their wing, and they became known as the “*American Dream Team.*” Vance said, “*we had a lot of laughs, Mick loved to laugh. I will really miss that. I am very thankful to have called him my friend.*”

(Photo: Michel and his wife)

---

# Claude Louis Levayer

Los Angeles Petanque Club

Unexpectedly, Claude passed away on July 25, 2024. Claude, who never liked to be in the spotlight, was always willing to assist whenever necessary, whether cooking and helping to serve at club events, or bringing his famous crème caramel, or digging a hole to remove a big stone or root from the courts to help his friends play their game. Claude, a chef like so many of LAPC’s members, loved good food, good wine, and good friendship. His generous spirit was truly inspiring, and he will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Bernard Meylan’s farewell to him was, “*Claude, I hope wherever you are, there are pétanque courts so you can keep playing, and when we will join you, we’ll all have fun again together.*”

(Photo: Vance Gerdau with Claude)



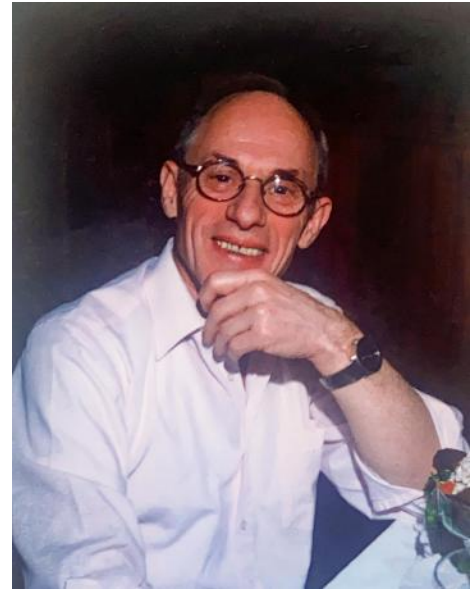
## Pierre Benjamin

1940 - 2024

La Boule New Yorkaise

Born in Gourin, in Brittany, Pierre Benjamin came to the U.S. in 1963. He spent his career working in gourmet restaurants around New York City and began playing pétanque with LBNY during the Central Park years.

He was deeply involved in the club, serving on the board of directors for a number of years. Perhaps his most significant contribution to LBNY was as an instructor in Bryant Park; there he spent countless hours playing with his friends and shepherding new players into the game he loved.



---

## Pierre Le Goff

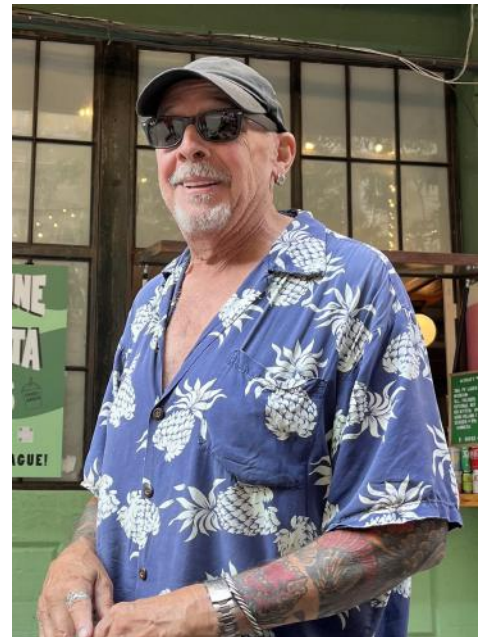
1956 - 2024

La Boule New Yorkaise

Pierre Le Goff was a member of LBNY for about fifty years. Born in New York in 1956, to Breton parents, he proudly wore the triskelion on his ring. He worked in the restaurant industry and started playing with the club in the mid-1970s, when games were played regularly in Central Park.

At the time of his death, he was a member of the board of directors, making invaluable contributions to the club's presence in the City. Pierre was the good-spirited, yet grumpy heart of LBNY's free pétanque lessons—running both the courts in Bryant Park and the club's expansion lessons in Washington Square. In this role, Pierre taught countless people—club members, lunchtime business-folk, and tourists alike.

He was a mentor and a true friend to anyone who spent time on the courts of Manhattan. When Pierre was diagnosed with cancer last year he reacted as he did to most things—what happens will happen; he'd already lived a *very* rich life.



# Ernesto Santos

1968—2024

La Boule New Yorkaise



On June 11th of this year, US pétanque lost one of its greatest players—not merely great in terms of skills or accomplishments, but great in terms of spirit. Ernesto Santos was a gravitational force, bending the field of play in this country toward his kindness, generosity, and deep respect for the game. He embodied US pétanque. An immigrant like so many of our members, he was also firmly rooted in New York

City, and in the nation's second-oldest club, La Boule New Yorkaise (LBNY). He traveled the country and the world playing and promoting the game, supporting others, and making friends wherever he went.

Born May 11, 1968, in Cuba to a Chinese mother and Cuban father, Ernesto (no middle name) Santos was taken out of school suddenly one day, and traveled with his mother and older brother, Albert, to a local dock. There, they boarded a small vessel that took them to an East German ship. The family traveled first to East Germany, then Moscow, Hong Kong, and finally to the United States, where they settled in Queens. Ernesto had a deep-seated creativity, intellect, and sense of humor that attracted a close-knit group of curious misfits—a group of friends developed in his high school and college years that were by his side until the end. He attended Brooklyn Tech for high school, and then majored in philosophy and art at Brooklyn College, where he developed skills in computer graphics and programming.

He got his first job through his friend Ted Matushita, and once in the door, Ern worked on getting other friends hired too, a generosity that seemed to come naturally to him. He held numerous jobs—including a teaching job in graphic design, technical work for Scholastic, a job at Bear Stearns making PowerPoint presentations, and a regular gig with ABC Upfront. But his career started to settle into a more regular rhythm when he teamed up with his friend Woody (Erich Wood) to found a series of tech companies: Dog

on a Horse, Quidd, and most recently Tibles. Ernesto also introduced Woody to the game he loved: pétanque.

Though he played other sports around the City, pétanque was the game that fully captured Ern's heart. He was introduced to the game in 2004 by another storied member of LBNY and of Los Angeles Pétanque Club, Yngve Bilsted. Ern took quickly to the game, becoming a skilled player all around, but most often playing as a shooter. He studied the game—watching videos of the masters, breaking down their mechanics, and regularly incorporating small adjustments into his own style. As in any aspect of his life, Ern didn't just keep his knowledge to himself—he learned from the great players around him, like Hery Rakotoarivony, Ti Meas, Xavier Thibaud, and Jack Vijit; and then he taught others.

Ern served as president of LBNY for a decade and stayed on the club's board of directors until his death. In many ways he was the face of LBNY, and behind the scenes he was its backbone, usually with Patrick Hayes by his side. During his time, the club began offering free pétanque lessons to the public in midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park. It sparked additional clubs around the City, like New York Pétanque Club, the short-lived Brooklyn Boules, and today, Local 718. LBNY's membership grew, as did the club's largest tournament, and one of Ern's great prides, the US Open (renamed from the NY Open by Ernesto himself). With the help of other New York players, he built a tournament that began as a regular attraction for Canadian players into a truly international affair. And it embodies what made Ernesto perhaps most happy in life: a weekend full of pétanque, good food, drinks, and hours spent with great friends.

In addition to anchoring the NY pétanque community, Ernesto was a long-time member of the board of the FPUSA, serving as its president until the time of his death. There, he worked with other dedicated members to help nurture the game, to raise the level of play in the US, and to encourage the growing diversity of the pétanque community, in particular supporting women and youth players.

From New York, Ern traveled around the world to play and encouraged others to do as well. He was a regular visitor to the courts of Blue Hill, ME; Portland, OR; Port Townsend, WA; Philadelphia, PA; and of course, Amelia Island, FL, where in recent years he, Tom Leon, and David Johnstone took over running the largest tournament in the US. Ernesto developed a special relationship with California. He traveled the globe frequently with California regulars like Mark Greenberg. But long before that, he also established close friendships with some of the state's (then) younger players, especially Narin Garrett.

Ern's travels frequently took him beyond the US as well. He traveled to two of France's largest tournaments in Millau and Marseille, as well as to several world championships as a coach, and as a delegate in support of fellow LBNY member, Joseph Hass. He would

make regular trips to Ensenada and Montréal, and most recently was a vociferous champion of traveling to Poland for tournaments run by the family of his dear friend Kasia Sliz. But Ernesto's most regular international appointment with pétanque was in London. There and in New York, he would meet up with his old friend Simon Adamsdale and the rest of London Pétanque for an annual club challenge—a tradition started by Yngve and Simon around 2002, with a now-battered trophy moving between the two clubs for over 20 years.

A visit to a boulebar in Malmö, Sweden inspired Ern's desire to open a similar indoor boules club in New York. He hatched plans with Aaron Weeks and Dana Bunker while hanging out at Hugue Dufour's restaurant, M. Wells; and years later they opened the Carreau Club together. As a regular member of the club's league, he helped introduce a whole new generation of players to the game. Ernesto was always generous with his time and knowledge. He was a teacher, helping others learn right until the end. And he was generous in other ways, too: buying a set of boules for a new player, championing friends' creative endeavors, helping new friends establish themselves in the US, or helping others get companies off the ground. And that generosity came back to take care of him as he was dealing with cancer. Numerous friends from the Carreau Club stepped up to help. And he received vitally important care from Steve and Wendy Ginsberg, Malik Hafayeth, Emile Boujeke, and Woody through his final day.

Today it's hard to imagine pétanque in America without Ernesto but remember that the seeds he planted and the spirit he brought to the game have already borne fruit; everyone who met and was affected by Ern will aspire to carry on his legacy. Ern will live on in these efforts, in the memories of all his friends, and fictionally as a character in Richie Narvaez's novel *Hipster Death Rattle*.

What can't be replicated are those late night long conversations at Shade in Greenwich Village. Ern sitting at a table with his closest companion, Lucien Rakotojaona, and anyone else lucky enough to grab a seat—recounting games played years ago; discussing music, etymological curiosities, or cooking; or listening to him read you some of his "[Asinine Poetry](#)." There you encounter Ernesto at his fullest: brilliant, curious, creative, and very odd. There he is simply enjoying life. And, as the evening winds down and the Village begins to quiet, there's a look in his eyes that lets you know he has the deepest respect for you, simply because you are his friend.



# Thank You

THANK YOU to members who contributed stories and news to the current edition, helping to enhance the connections within our community and beyond.

If you have news or an article to share for the next edition of Petanque Pulse, please contact your regional counselor, or Michelle Dang, [sactownpetanque@gmail.com](mailto:sactownpetanque@gmail.com), & Heidi Davison, [heidi@heididavison.com](mailto:heidi@heididavison.com).



*Michelle & Heidi*

## **FPUSA Board of Directors**

Kirk Edwards  
President

Vacant  
Vice President

Steve Walker  
Secretary

Janice Bissonnette  
Treasurer

## **Regional Counselors**

**Northeast:** Joseph Hassoune (La Boule New Yorkaise)

**Mid-America:** Shirley Jones (Carolina Petanque)

**Mid-America:** Shannon Hodge (Zanesfield Petanque Club)

**Southeast:** Mitzi Gimenez (South Florida Petanque Club)

**Southeast:** Songmi Keating (Amelia Island Boules Club)

**Southeast:** Heidi Davison (Classic City Petanque Club)

**Central:** Michelle Healy (San Antonio Petanque Club)

**Southwest:** John Harris (Oakhurst Petanque Club)

**Southwest:** Ben Bull (Fresno Petanque Club)

**NorCal:** Bleys Rose (Petaluma Valley Petanque Club)

**NorCal:** Michelle Dang (Sactown Petanque)

**Northwest:** Barbara Kongsbak (Portland Petanque Club)

**Northwest:** Neil Bastian (Portland Petanque Club)