

THE BIRTH OF THE
"ANNUAL LADIES OPEN SHUFFLEBOARD TOURNAMENT"

A couple of years ago, while sitting in their usual places watching the men play at one of the local tournaments, a small seed was hatched in the minds of a few women who were thinking "why am I sitting here watching instead of playing?"

It had always been the same, the women played in the ladies draw doubles which was always the opening event of the week with a \$10.00 entry fee and unless there was an ABC event, (because there had never been a ladies singles) would be content to sit and watch the men play for the other 5 days of the tournament. We wondered why this was, and being women, we asked. We were told by the tournament director that women would never pay more than \$10.00 entry fee, that only local women showed up and if they had a singles event rather than a doubles they wouldn't get any women to sign up other than us. If we pursued this all we would accomplish would be to drive away the few local women who did show up. On the other hand the men who showed up came from all over the States to compete. We didn't agree of course, but we didn't argue the fact any further then, but the seed had taken root and had started to grow. We had been to Reno the previous year and knew better than this. We had caught the fever in Reno, we signed up for and competed in every event we could enter. A couple of us did well and a couple of us didn't, I had personally been demoralized in the first event I had ever played in by Diana Hagen, but we were all there to compete and we all came away having fun and bringing with us a lot of great memories. As we watched some of the best women players there are we also knew that there was nothing stopping us from being that good some day. But you need to compete to be that good, and the one thing we knew that we had in common with them was that we were competitors too. We weren't in their category, at least not yet. What we did establish was that we weren't alone. Women are competitors also, they want to play the game and win as much as the men do. So what was holding them back? Granted there were very few in the pro category in Reno, and there were a lot of women who even thought they played, they were only there to watch. We weren't ones to watch, we wanted to play, let the men sit and watch us for once. (What an original idea). With that thought in mind we approached some of the other women competitors, and the more we talked, the more enthusiastic we became, we were out of control, why we could have a woman's only tournament, (and so that the men would have something to do while we women played), we

could hold it in Las Vegas or Reno, and of course we would have an opening event for them, a draw doubles, kind of cute and apropos. What woman wouldn't want to be there? Why it would be great. To our surprise there were a few men who were really behind the idea and offered to help us out with it. But to be really successful it shouldn't be a women's only we should have events for the men too. After all we couldn't expect them to just sit and watch as their wife's and girlfriends played, could we? I mean, they are the reason women were at the events anyway. Well it was a lot of fun while we talked about it, but the more we talked the more complicated it became. So it looked like that was all it would ever be, just a dream of ours for a while and lot of talk.

Well, try as they may, they just couldn't kill that seed once it had taken root. And so it began. Without any idea how it would turn out the first "Amateur Ladies Only Shuffleboard Tournament" was held at the Old Town Saloon in Livermore, California on Sept 17- 20 1999 hosted by Ray and Sandi Comer. It had 4 events with 27 women entering, 5 from Southern California, 3 from Sacramento, 10 from San Jose and Livermore and 2 from Arizona, with \$1000.00 in prize money. What surprised us most was the number of men who showed up, what surprised them most was what a great time they had, their unanimous comment "We love watching you because you have so much fun. Win or lose you laugh and have fun. There were no fights or arguments, men could learn a lot about sportsmanship from you women."

We couldn't let the seed die now, so it was decided before final goodbyes in Livermore that if Arizona could travel to California, then we would travel to Arizona. If they would host the next one we would be there. The seed had pushed its way to the surface and was now a seedling. But would it continue to grow? We were bound and determined to make sure. So we continued to spread the word hoping to draw even more women from greater distances to the Arizona tournament. We challenged them to come, and promised if they make Arizona, we will come to their's.

With high hopes and expectations, we traveled to the MVP in Phoenix Arizona, owned by fellow shuffler Phil Gardner, the host of this year's ladies shuffleboard tournament on September 15-17. Linda Churchman, the tournament director was the driving force that brought this event Phoenix. It was Linda who was a

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competitor at the first tournament the year before in Livermore, California and who we promised we would be at her event. The MVP had 4 events with 27 ladies in attendance, 14 from out of state (12 from California and Linda Nobles and Jeri Billard from Texas), and 13 from Phoenix. There were 10 ladies in division I; 17 in division II; 12 teams in doubles. There was \$7,855.00 in prize money. New friendships and competitors were made. The laughter and good times flowed. Did it outdo the first one, I don't think that was a question that came up. It brought its own good times and memories and anticipation for next years event.

The women behind these events decided to make this a traveling tournament, and at each consecutive tournament it will be decided on where the next one would be held. In this manner it would enable local women who up till now only played in leagues or at the favorite establishment to get involved in tournament play with women in all skill levels and hopefully pass on the fever to them, bringing them into the family, hopefully joining the rest of us diehards following the competition and the tournament from State to State, making new friends and competitive enemy's along the route. There are a lot of women out there I haven't played against and a lot of States I haven't seen and I plan to be at everyone as the tournament grows and travels across this great country of ours. With the attendance at this event of Jeri Billard and Linda Nobles from Texas, it was decided that next years event would be in Texas, hopefully each time drawing more and more women to the event. The biggest thing that came out of this years event, other than a great time by all, was that it would no longer be an amateur ladies tournament. From this date forward it would be open to women in all points brackets (-1 to 4/5's) and be known as the "Annual Ladies Open" shuffleboard tournament. It was also established that if this was going to be successful and we wanted to get women to travel to these events, that we needed to make it worthwhile. Granted wherever it was held we would get the locals, which is what we want but we also want to attract the pros to the events. It is only by playing with and against better players that anyone will improve their game. This is where we would like to get some input from the women out there who are interested in keeping this event going from year to year. There are two schools of thought on this issue and would like to put them out for a vote or comments and suggestions on how to handle both sides of the issue. On one hand we have the Tavern owner and the local event coordinator who feel that they won't have any kind of a turnout if the entry fee's are higher than the \$25.00 we charged at the last event because non of their local players will pay that

much to play and they don't feel there will be much of a turnout without the locals, on the other hand we have the pro's and 1 and 2 rated players who will travel to events if there is enough money in the pot to make it worth their while. Why pay \$400 airfare and hotel fees when you can only win a couple of hundred dollars in an event? You will always get a couple of us who will travel anywhere just to play and support the event, but it will never be anything more than just a local event with a couple of out of towners showing up. We know that you can't please everyone, this is evident at every tournament we have played in, but there must be a middle ground we women can agree on so that this becomes one of the major shuffleboard events of the year. One that we look forward to and plan our vacations around. So help us out and give us your suggestions, what would it take to get you to travel to this event year after year? We are waiting to hear from you.

To bring this tournament to your state you need to be at a previous tournament. Sometime during the tournament it will be voted on as to where the next event will be held. Now that you ladies know how it works we hope to see a lot more of you at the event in Texas. Be sure and watch the Board Talk for upcoming details of next year's "2001 Annual Ladies Open Shuffleboard Tournament" in Texas.

PARTING THOUGHTS FOR A FEW UNFORGETTABLE MEN

What I would like to say and keep in mind; this is from me alone, but it is a feeling I have gotten from all the women, and not just at the last two women's tournaments although it was more prominent at them, is that "we are the ones playing the game, not you". We all came to play and to win otherwise why would we be there. Just because we laugh and have fun while we are playing doesn't mean we aren't dead serious about winning the game. I have yet to see someone play better while being ridiculed for the way they play the game. If you think it is a bad shot, keep it to yourself. If you think they are about to make a bad shot or the wrong shot, keep it to yourself. It is not fair to the person you are yelling at (out loud or under your breath) or trying to coach and it is not fair to their opponents. While they are in the middle of a game, they are not your wife or girlfriend or pupil, they are a competitor and you should treat them the same way you would expect to be treated. Don't distract them and take them out of their game. If you can't do that, then you shouldn't be there and the truth be known you're not wanted there either. I don't know one of you

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who would tolerate someone doing that to you while you were competing in a game, and we expect no less from you while we are competing. For the men who are there in support of the players and the game, for those who do the boards, brackets, bring us drinks, and occasional back rubs, who yell and applaud us win or lose, who laugh with us and not at us, I love you for it and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are what makes the game great.

**MVP HOSTS:
"LADIES AMATEUR SHUFFLEBOARD
TOURNAMENT"**

We would like to thank our hosts Phil Gardner (owner of the MVP) and Linda Churchman the driving force that brought this event to Phoenix.
-- Lorraine Bingham

The MVP in Phoenix Arizona . It had 4 events, 30 women 29 locals, 4 from Southern California, 6 from Northern California, and 2 from Texas. There was \$1,000 in prize money. Jack Davis came from Texas to do the auction. Jim "mmmm" and Wendell "mmmm" did the bracket boards and wiped the tables. -- Linda Churchman

**DAVID L's Hideout Lounge
Long time supporters!**

Pictured below are Bob and Marsha Brown (after Marsha just beat Bob in arm wrestling!), long-time supporters and organizers of shuffleboard and former American Bar owners at Portland, IN (an future Hall of Famers):



(See David L's Hideout Lounge October 14-15th, 2000 Open Doubles and Mixed Doubles events starting on this page Column 2! Thanks for your input Glen Ingram!)

**DAVID L's Hideout Lounge
October 14-15, 2000 Results!**

David L's Hideout Lounge in Yorktown, IN had another great tournament on October 14-15, 2000, hosted by David Greer. Players report that this is a great place to play and say that owner David Greer is always a wonderful host! The below results and winner photos were submitted to The Board Talk Editors by Glen Ingram:

October 14, 2000, "Open Doubles":
First Place: (Below): Jim Dewitt (left) and Glen Ingram (right) with Host David Greer (center) presenting honors



Second Place: (Below): Emmitt Wilcox (left) and Larry Creakbaum (both Indiana Hall of Famers) with Host David Greer (center) presenting honors



Third Place: (no pictures available): Buddy Broka and Gene McLeod.



Fourth Place: Sheryl Cockerill (left) and Lew Coulter (right)

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