

## THE CALIFORNIA SHUFFLEBOARD HALL OF FAME

Induction Ceremony Honoring

**Ron Graham**

Presented at

**Papa Joe's Lounge**  
Vallejo, California

**October 3, 2009**

## CALIFORNIA SHUFFLEBOARD HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY FOR

**RON GRAHAM**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2009

HOSTED BY  
RANDY JACOBSEN  
PAPA JOE'S LOUNGE  
335 COUCH ST. VALLEJO, CA

Master of Ceremonies.....Rick Thomas  
Vice President CSHOF

Tributes.....Hal Perry  
Director TSA

Bob Hunt  
Director TSA

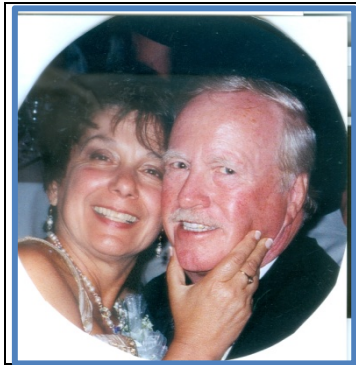
Paul Panholzer

Others

Induction and Award Presentation.....Rick Thomas

Acceptance of Award.....Ron Graham

## Ronnie Graham



**Ronnie and wife Josie Graham**

Wesley Ronald Graham, aka Ron Graham, Ronnie Graham and “San Jose Ron”, grew up in West Virginia and graduated from high school in 1955 with honors. Right after graduation, he joined the U.S. Navy where he was accepted to a 26-week Electronic Technician School upon finishing boot camp. Of the 200 people who started in this school, only 85 would complete the program. Ron graduated fifth and went to sea on the NATO flag ship where he worked as the maintenance tech for the four master radars. This Navy education allowed Ron to pursue his dream career in digital telecommunications.

In January 1958, the Navy transferred him to Moffet Field in the San Jose area. A year later, he was discharged and began working at Vidar Corp. Vidar was the second company, after AT&T, to develop a digital carrier system for the Telecom industry.

Ron is very proud of the three adult children from his first marriage in 1961. Donald owns and operates a travel agency in Brazil. Alice is married and a full-time mom caring for four of his grandchildren—Ashley (21), Sarah (15), Amanda (13), and Trevor (10). They live in Almaden, Ca. Rhonda lives in Phoenix and works at Intel. She gave Ron his first grandson, Michael, now 23.

### **The Early Years: 1961-1965**

In 1961, Ron began playing shuffleboard in San Jose. Leonard (Pee Wee) Ramos was a big help in those years, especially in long-session strategy.

In the early sixties, Glen Davidson moved from Roseburg, Oregon, to the San Jose area and became Ron’s partner. They traveled Northern California to Modesto, Marysville, Stockton, and other cities. During this period, Ron began to identify weights based on their speed. Glen knew the action in Southern Oregon so they took a successful trip to Klamath Falls, Roseburg and Eugene. One time in Eugene, they were trailing in a game 14 to 12 with Ron’s hammer. Just as Ron was about to lag, one of the side betters exploded a firecracker between Ron’s legs. After a pause for a gulp of beer, Ron lagged a three. He thought Glen was going to pass out.

There were no scheduled tournaments and little action in San Jose at that time, so Ron went to Oakland to find games. The owner of a club called “Vi Lloyds” asked him to care for the board and to be there for action.

People would partner with anyone to make a match. Tommy Workman from Southern California was Ron’s partner in an all-night session. Once they got the board, they never lost a game. Tommy had the greatest left-hand that Ron had ever seen. Later in Oakland, Ron set a record by playing for 40 consecutive hours of singles in a session against two different players.

The first time Ron met Hal Perry was in Oakland in 1964. Ted Burger (a very good player) was Ron’s partner. Hal’s partner was less experienced. They had a great session. Hal went on to become a Hall of Fame player.

Ron would also travel to Reno to look for games. On one trip to Reno, Billy Mays was there. Billy would make matches that did not favor him. He played Ron shooting one handed which was not a big advantage for Ron since Billy’s free hand was better than most people’s left. Billy busted anyway. Later that night, Jerry Kelly from Redwood City came in, and Ron introduced Billy to Jerry as “Winnemucca Wayne”. (Billy’s middle name was Wayne.) Ron gave Billy money to play and soon Jerry was busted. Jerry shook Billy’s hand and said, “Mister, I don’t know who you really are, but you’re the best player I have ever seen.” Ron agreed!

On another Reno trip, Ron and his partner Jack Lister discovered that Sacramento had scheduled an Inter-City match with Reno. Sacramento was short two players, so Jack and Ron played for Sacramento. Jack was a great hit-and-go, hammer-control type partner for Ron. In their 15-point game, Ron lagged five consecutive three’s.

## Years 1966-1970

In early 1966, Ron took 2nd in the Santa Clara County Championship. In March of 1966, Ron's company transferred him to San Luis Obispo to start a new assembly and test facility for their digital carrier system.

To play shuffleboard, Ron traveled to the Visalia area, Chino and Riverside on various trips. The local action was in Atascadero, north of San Luis Obispo. One of Los Angeles' top players, Jerry Gregory, and a Texan called Odessa Red happened by Atascadero. Once they began to play, Jerry said: "We haven't heard much of Ronnie Graham in Southern California". Ron replied that his job and family limited the time that he could take long trips. Jerry played Ron most of the games in the session and Red a few. Each of them won one game while losing all of their \$1100. Jerry was a good sport to shake Ron's hand and say: "Now, I have heard of Ronnie Graham. May I have gasoline money to get home?"

Bobby Goldsmith ran the California State Championship Tournament on Labor Day weekend in 1968. The events were teams, doubles and singles. Bill Jennings (now in the Missouri Hall of Fame) was Ron's doubles partner. The results:

- Bill and Ron won the Cal State Doubles Championship.
- Team Championship - Ron was invited to play for San Jose and picked his old mentor "Pee Wee" Ramos for his partner. They played and won the 1st, 4th, and 7th games (if required) in all of the matches. San Jose won the team championships.
- Building on the momentum from the team and doubles, Ron won the Cal State Singles Championship at 6:30 Tuesday morning beating one of L.A.'s great players -- A.Z. Turnbo -- to complete the Grand Slam.

A few weeks after the State Championship Tournament, Ron was back in Visalia. Bobbie Goldsmith wanted to bet on A.Z. and Robbie Goldsmith wanted to bet on Ron. After several hours and a lot of four lags, Ronnie and Robbie had a nice win. Ron recalls that the board at "The Hut" was really easy to lag.



**Ron shows the trophies Bobby Goldsmith presented him in 1968 for the California State Singles and Doubles championships.**

## 1971 to the Present

Ron continued to work for Vidar and was transferred back to San Jose where he played shuffleboard at the Happy Hour and taught younger players.

At this time, a mutual friend set Ron up on a blind date with Josie, who is now his wife. They have been together ever since that first meeting, and married in 1975. Together they have one daughter, Natalie. Natalie is married and is a biologist, working at Sonoma State University.

They made their first home in Novato, then moved north to Petaluma and lived there for 18 years, riding and showing horses, raising livestock for food and maintaining a large vegetable garden.

Ron and Josie have traveled all over this country and visited Scotland and many Latin American countries. Ron managed a telecommunications project in Brazil, and spent a year getting to know the Brazilian people and learning the Portuguese language.

Ron and Josie now live in retirement in Santa Rosa, caring for a much smaller vegetable garden and less property. This gives them more time for the things they enjoy most.

Ron played and promoted the game in Petaluma and in Santa Rosa until he developed a smoke allergy, limiting his ability to play in a smoking environment. At present, Ron is rated as a Division I player.

Ron's health became a big concern since he developed heart disease and had two stents installed on January 10, 2002. This procedure was very successful and his heart is working just fine.

Ron continues to play in the Reno North American Shuffleboard Tournaments and in the San Joaquin Valley tournaments.

### **Recent Highlights:**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Division II singles at the NASC in Reno, 2000.
- His "Add to Nine Four-Person" team took second place in Reno to win \$4000 in 2005. His team members were Grant Manning, Paul Panholzer and Kathy Thomas.
- Ron won the 2006 Memorial Day Open A-B draw tournament in Manteca, CA, playing as the "A" player with Max Cartier. They lost their first match and won six straight games.
- Ron took 1st Place in Division II competition at the Red Neck Games in Red Bluff in 2007.
- Ron's "Add to Nine Four-Person" team took 3rd Place in Reno in 2007. The team members were Paul Panholzer, Dave Gunsaulis, and Grant Watson.



**Paul Panholzer, Ron, Kathy Thomas & Grant Manning, Reno 2005**

### **TESTAMONIALS**

Ron, Congratulations to you for a well deserved introduction to the Ca. Shuffleboard Hall of Fame!

Over the years, I have come to know you as fierce competitor, very smart and talented person and Shuffleboard player.

I've admired how you diligently practice and work at your game, as well as your love for the game.

Thanks for mentoring and helping me become a better player.

Your Pal,  
"Dean the Shot" Williams  
Wagon Wheel Saloon  
Santa Rosa, CA





**Ron with Randy Jacobsen, owner of Papa Joe's Lounge, Vallejo, CA**

I met Ronnie in 1968, the same year he won the California State Championship. Although it was over 40 years ago, I still remember it vividly.

I was very impressed with his smooth delivery and accuracy; I was fascinated by his quiet demeanor and unbelievable ability. When it comes to strategy, nobody plays a smarter game. How could someone so good not be loud and boastful?

Ron was my mentor. We played a lot of partners, and it was his consistent skill and confidence that eliminated all pressures during the game. He always held me up, and I knew he would!

He taught me a lot about the game, including the "Finger-held spread shot", which upped my level of play, became my signature shot, and was instrumental to my induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. I consider his teachings a gift, but the greatest gift, by any measure, has been, is, and always will be, his friendship.

He is a true Shuffleboard Legend!

Robbie Scott-Gann

Ron, it is my misfortune that I did not get to know you until the last couple of years. When I first meet you at the 2008 Memorial Day tournament in Stockton, CA, I was fortunate to draw you in the ABC event. It was then that I got to know and respect The Ron Graham. What a very nice person you are. I know you are in one of life's biggest battles, Ron, and I want you to know that my thoughts and prayers will be with you. My sincere congratulations and welcome to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

*Jim Martin*

President of the CSHOF

Congratulations on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. Now I understand why the "Masked Man" was playing in those tournaments in Reno and Arizona.

- Bob Brunskill



**Ron at the Redneck Games, 2007**



**Ron with his four children. Back row: Alice and Donald.  
Front row: Natalie and Rhonda**



**Ron & family. Back row: Granddaughters Sarah & Ashley, son-in-law Jim, daughter Alice, grandson Michael, daughter Rhonda, son Donald, son-in-law Jeremy. Front Row: Granddaughter Amanda, wife Josie, Ron, grandson Trevor, daughter Natalie.**

I first met Ron at the L&M Club in Oakland, California in 1962/1963 or sometime in the sixties. You could call this my first road trip for the great game of shuffleboard. I was traveling with Bob Aliva, whom I was teaching the game. I was pushing two years experience and Bob was closing in on six months. We sucked!

Anyway, this was Saturday night and we were looking for action. We found it at the L&M Club, thanks to San Jose Ron and Ted Berger (ex-pool player). This was our first look at real shuffleboard players. They played the game much better than we did. The big difference was board play and strategy. They almost never missed a weight. We shot from the back of the board. They played from the side. We shot with a flat weight stroke. They used Jersey. Good luck!

Well the first week we made a few dollars, even though they played better. We lagged out of trouble many times through the evening. Pretty lucky really! We headed home thinking we were pretty good. BIG mistake. The next week we got our asses kicked. We found out later they were the best doubles team in Northern California. Welcome to shuffleboard on the road....Welcome to more practice.

I didn't see Ron much after that. Ron was tied up with a great job and started his family in Santa Rosa, California. This slowed down the shuffleboard for awhile. But in his later years, he played some in Northern Cal, Nevada and Oregon. Still one of the better players in the state and another good choice for the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Thanks for the lessons.

Hal Perry

\*Old Timers Choice #1

After being addicted to shuffleboard for more than 15 years, sometime around 1997, I met Mr. Ronny Graham. I have to say, out of the (A.H.) board players that I've met, I learned more from Mr. Ronny in a couple of months than I learned in at least a decade. His dedication to the game has been an inspiration to me, and his friendship has been, and is, a blessing.

Sincerely,  
Digital Darrell

Ron and I met in a small bar in Santa Rosa. He was the first one I played who really knew the game. He is a smart player with a never-give-up attitude. I learned a lot about shuffleboard from Ron, not only the game itself, but the history. We have talked for hours about his session play and flat boards of the 60's and 70's and all the great players he has encountered. Congratulations on your well deserved induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Paul Panholzer



**Ron and Paul Panholzer**

I met Ron Graham in the 1960's in San Jose. Many good players lived in that area. San Jose was the hub of shuffleboard in Northern California, with players like Pee Wee Ramos, Mickey Gomes, Tom Beam, George Sears, Jack Wilson, AZ Turnbo and my good friend, Bill Jennings.

Ron played in a fast crowd and held his own. Ron was a good player and not a bad golfer. He is well deserved to be in the California Hall of Fame.

Your friend,  
George Camara

I only played against Ron once in Exeter many years ago, but in my conversations with other players about Ron's playing ability, he is truly deserving of being in the Hall of Fame.

Ron, congratulations on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Paul Weber

Ronald Graham, congratulations on your induction into the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame. You have always been a great player and a true gentleman of shuffleboard. It has been a pleasure to play with you at all times.

Good luck, you deserve the honor.

Yours truly,  
Marion Bailey



Ron, it was a lot of fun playing the team event with you in Reno. I had been away from the game for several years because of work, and you were a very good and patient captain for me. I have enjoyed reading about all the old days of shuffleboard and your part in them.

Congratulations!

Kathy Thomas



**Ron demonstrates the "Bermuda Triangle" style free-hand  
at the Wagon Wheel in Santa Rosa, CA**

Ron Graham is a nice man. Very competitive. I have enjoyed learning and playing shuffleboard with him. Congratulations Ron.

Alice Blankenship

I am happy to see that the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame is recognizing a great player from the 1960's and 1970's. Ron Graham fits that description perfectly and is deserving of this honor.

In his heyday, Ron was a well-known California player and respected nationwide. I met Ron in the early years but never had the opportunity to play him -- he was way out of my league. While he didn't play for a number of years, he came back just about as strong as ever. Even today, Ron is a fine player and great lagger. I've noticed that Bill Melton always tries to buy him at the Reno tournament. That should tell you something.

Congratulations Ron.

Bob Hunt

Congratulations Ron!

It is great to hear of your induction into the California Shuffle Board Hall of Fame. In looking back over my 30 plus years of playing I figured out that I have played with you more than anyone, except Darrell. I also learned more about competition style strategy from you than anyone.

We not only played many great games but also shared a love and season tickets for the 49ers.

I guess I can now say that I've beat 2 Hall of Famers!

"Once Champion, always a Champion", as George Lucas used to say.

Best wishes,

Brian "The Thumb" Bethel

Antonio's and The Wagon Wheel Saloon  
Santa Rosa, CA





**Paul Panholzer, Rick Thomas, Kathy Thomas, Grant Manning, Ron Graham dividing the \$4,000 prize money for 2<sup>nd</sup> place 4-person team in Reno, 2005.**

Around four or five years ago I walked into a local bar and saw several guys playing shuffleboard. I introduced myself and challenged the board. When Ron Graham introduced himself, I was amazed. I knew of him from the old "Happy Hour" days in San Jose CA. Names like Hal, Neal, Billy, Orville, Mt. View George and Mickey. The list goes on and on, including Bill Jennings and Ron. Shuffleboard at its best! I had not played in years, but Ron got me back playing. He took it upon himself to be everyone's tutor on shot making and more importantly, the mental side of the game. He is still our benchmark and the player we strive to be.

Thanks, Ron.

**Dave Gunsaulis**

San Rosa, CA

Ron has set the standard for excellence in Shuffleboard play. The setting of the bar so high has made everyone who plays in our group a better player and we hope a force to be reckoned with in our future Shuffleboard competitions.

John Schram

When I met Ron, it was June 3, 2003. I walked into a bar named Antonio's. He was playing shuffleboard and I asked him if he would teach me the game. Ever since that day, I have been to Reno every year for 5 years straight. Congratulations, Ron, on your well-deserved induction to the California Shuffleboard Hall of Fame.

Reno Ray O'Shell



**Ray O'Shell, Max Cartier, Paul Panholzer & Ron**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO'S RON GRAHAM**  
California champion in shuffleboard.

## San Luis Obispo wins state shuffleboard title

San Luis Obispo, already the home of two national sports champions, can now lay claim to one and two-thirds California titles, thanks to Ron Graham.

The Cal Poly Mustangs won the NCAA track and wrestling crowns earlier this year while Graham, 32-year-old San Luis Obispo resident, picked up the state honors in the shuffleboard championships last weekend at Visalia.

Graham won the singles title, shared the doubles title with Bill Jennings of San Jose and was a member of the San Jose Happy Hour Club which took the six-man team crown.

Graham, who transferred here from San Jose two years

ago as test department foreman for Vidar Corporation, also competed in the tourney last year but finished fourth. The defending champion this year was Dennis Bell of San Francisco. Graham defeated Bell in an early 15-point game before defeating A. Z. Tornboy of Van Nuys, 15-14, in the championship match. The doubles teams play two out of three games to determine a winner while the six-man teams play a three out of five set.

The state tourney is sanctioned by the National Shuffleboard Association. Next year's championship meet is to be held in the Governor's Hall at the fairgrounds in Sacramento.