

Wandering Women Shuffleboard

By Dennis Bittner

DURAND – The Wandering Women Shuffleboard Tournament held in Durand at the Club Car Lounge is now history. Seventy women representing eight states played in the three-day event.

In singles play on Friday, with 41 entries, two California ladies placed in the top three. Chris Brown and Jane Mourgos finished first and third. Indiana, represented by Jody Berry, was second. Saginaw, Michigan's Linda Mitchell was fifth and Durand's own Brenda Kane was seventh. Play was extended into Saturday by the large field.

In the bring-partner doubles event, Michigan fared much better on Saturday. Four of the top six teams had at least one player from Michigan. Winners were Sandy Blade and Jessica Williams from Madison Heights. The event finished on Sunday.

Tournament results were:

Singles – 1. Chris Brown, California; 2. Jody Berry, Indiana; 3. Jane Mourgos, California; 4. Jeri Ingram, Indiana; 5. (tie) Linda Mitchell, Saginaw, MI., and Sheryl Cockrill, Indiana; 7. (tie) Cindy Clark, Arizona, and Brenda Kane, Durand.

Doubles (bring-partner) – 1. Sandy Blade and Jessica Williams, Michigan; 2. Vicki Morgan and Mary Brown, Indiana; 3. Deb Voorhis and Brenda Kane, Indiana and Michigan; 4. Kim Stripe and Laura Rebecca, Michigan; 5. Fritz Broka and Ann Harrell, Indiana; 6. Pat Gray and Martha Hall, Florida and Michigan.

True shuffleboard, first called shoveboard and then shovelboard, seems to have originated in England, where there is a record of its being played in 1532 in its earliest form of shoving coins across a polished tabletop as a pastime for royalty.

Shuffleboard first came to the United States around the time of the Civil War and grew through the early 1900s.

Then came Prohibition. Speakeasies didn't need nor want games of skill and it was during this period that shuffleboard began to decline.

With World War II, men from all across the country were routed through New York and the Northeast on their way to Europe. This was a hotbed for shuffleboard and, as a result, it went national. The boards were reduced from 32 feet long to 22 feet and they now fit into most rooms for play.

Weights went from heavy brass to the streamlined stainless steel of today. Sand used to speed the boards evolved into fine corn and silicone waxes.

Table Shuffleboard has made a strong steady climb back through this decade. Now, there are national rules and sanctioning, media exposure and a policy board of professional players.