

May 30, 2004

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE GAME OF SHUFFLEBOARD?

I remember, do you? The important thing is that however we got into the game is probably the same way we can get others involved. My father-in-law would drag me out to the courts every time we visited them in Florida. I didn't like it because all I wanted to do was play golf! Well after a while he got me into some tournaments and I finally won something and was HOOKED! I now figure golf is still there for me when I don't want to shuffle any more. Lary Faris got involved when he was very young because his mother was a shuffler. She would give him 5 points if he reached the 1st lag line and 10 if he reached the 2nd lag line. I bet everyone else's story falls somewhere in between. The other day a shuffler stopped by the house, on his way home from the courts, with a 10-year-old grandson who was just thrilled with the game. Every kid I've ever seen play the game is thrilled with it. My kids come to visit and the first thing they want to do is head for the courts, of course my wife makes me sit on the side lines and "be quite" if you can believe that. And that is the best thing that could happen because they just have a blast doing what ever they want. You know that's how Glen Peltier maintains everyone should learn, give em the basics and let them go for six months, guess he's right.

Another technique that works is to pick out a student each year, our club gives lessons and yours probably does too, and stay with that student for a year. I know Dave Minnich does that; he stays with then for two years and then picks up a new student. His students wind up being very successful players! I picked up a student two years ago and told her after lessons that if she stuck with it I would play the Zephyrhills mixed doubles with her at the end of the season. We did play and made it through a couple of matches, she was thrilled and I make it a practice only to say good things to students and so should you and here's why! I didn't realize the pressure she was under, as soon after our last match she fainted, hit her head and wound up in the hospital. Last season worked out better. One of our old time Pros was trying to teach his grandson to play the game and of course the grandson didn't think grandpa knew right from wrong but when I happened along and told him the very same things he did them all. I told him that if he kept working with his grandpa, who had helped me learn the game that I would play a tournament with him at the end of the season. We did and we won a place. He was thrilled, grandpa was thrilled, but most astonishing is that the Zephyrhills shuffleboard community was thrilled that I took the time to help him. You too can bring new players into the game if you try! Remember we don't need many, just a few and our courts would be full again.

Alan Greenspan says the "baby boomers" will start collecting social security in 2008 and then our problem will be just the opposite!!

Earl