



Senior Tennis Times

The 50+ tennis experience

November 2013

Ruby Rott story

There's a great story about Ruby, who again won a medal at the Senior Games. Here's the link to the InnerCity website story: <http://tinyurl.com/mrf9vgc>

We goofed!

In the October newsletter, we had the wrong names to this picture. **Gene Dickie** and **Lindsay Paskewitz** were the winners of the Pro Division of the Grandparent/Grandchild tournament.



On the inside

- P.2. Steve Wilkinson Hall of Fame!
- P.5. Expanded open Saturday drills at Life Time White Bear Lake—try before you buy!
- P.6. Gopher schedules. Note the Gopher Invitational, Oct 31 thru Nov 3. Best tennis in town, for free!
- P.7. Tip from a pro—footwork!
- P.8. Perrys' passionate performances (Barb & Felix)
- P.9. Tennis players' quirks, tics, & superstitions



Membership renewal—it's in your mail! Please be kind to our volunteers and return promptly!

Memorials

In memory of Howard Wagner, from Jean Murdock.
In memory of Mary A. Haviland, from Mary Ann McGuire.
Thank you Jean and Mary Ann for your gifts to Senior Tennis in honor of past members.

Upcoming events

Open House at White Bear Lake LTF
November 16, 2:00-4:00 PM

This is an opportunity for all STPC members to check out this Life Time Fitness club. Details page 5. Also see membership offer on page 7. Chance to "try before you buy."

Tennis events

By **Bob Busch**

Senior Games

Congratulations to STPC members who participated at a very high level in the **2013 Senior Games** competition during the summer in Cleveland, Ohio. **Ray Ranallo**, Minneapolis, and **Chuck Supplee**, Bloomington, won a gold medal in 90-Doubles and **Ruby Rott**, St. Paul, won a silver medal in 80-Singles. Supplee also won silver and Ranallo won bronze in 90-Singles as they played against each other in a hard-fought 5-7, 7-5, 1-0 (6) match. Rott upset the #2 and #3 80-Singles seeded players in the quarter and semi-final matches before losing in the final to a player from the state of Virginia. Rott and **Patricia Dahlman** of White Bear Lake finished fourth in 75-Doubles. The Baseline Tennis Center at the U of M will be the host for the 2015 Senior Games.



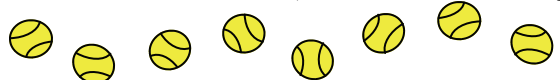
Youth tennis fund raisers

On Saturday, November 9, 5-10 PM, **Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center** is hosting their 2013 Pro-Am featuring an open bar, free food, silent auction and mini-tennis tournament pairing local pros with amateurs in a "Calcutta" pick-the-winner style competition. Cost is \$25 with proceeds dedicated to their youth development continuum that pairs low-income youth with tennis programming and academic support from elementary through high school.

On Friday, November 15, **InnerCity Tennis** will be holding their annual benefit at International Market Square in Minneapolis featuring dinner, drinks, silent auction and raffle for \$100 per ticket. Trent Tucker, new Minneapolis Public School Athletic Director and former NBA star will headline the evening along with emcee, Justin Gaard, two-time Minnesota State High School Champion and KFAN sportscaster. Proceeds will go to support the free and reduced-rate children's programs for InnerCity Tennis and for improvements to Reed-Sweat Family Tennis Center.

Hall of Fame Inductees

(Tennis events—continued on page 6)



Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

A nonprofit corporation, P.O. Box 5525
Hopkins, MN 55343. On the web:

www.seniortennismn.com

Senior Tennis Times

The Senior Tennis Times is published ten times annually by and for the members of the Senior Tennis Players Club, Inc.

Board of Directors

President:

Andreas Papanicolaou.....612-825-8617
Vice-President Richard Winga 612-886-1935
Secretary: Sharon Gribble651-633-0324
Treasurer: Wanda Davies.....612-750-8987
New Members: Dick Brandt....612-803-5786
Linda Haller.....612-558-1654
Dennis Hykes.....952-929-7595
Ken Landro763-544-9757
Darlene Moynagh.....651-436-8927
Ray Ranallo612-823-5368
Penny Ream612-328-8364
Dick Tow612-375-9016
Denis Woulfe.....651-263-0749

Other positions

Renewing Members:

Ronnae Garrity952-938-0374
Training Director:
Mark Mudra.....952-833-1469
Training Advisor: Roger Boyer
Advisor: Mary Kaminski612-781-3271
Tennis schedules:
Thue Rasmussen.....651-917-0075
Newsletter Editor and Webmaster
David Sommer.....612-276-1313

Advertising

Send by email or USPS to the newsletter editor by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. **Please send all payments to the newsletter editor.**

Ad rates (first month/additional months):

Full page (7.5x10)..... \$165/135
Half page (7.5x4.9)..... 110/85
Half page on back cover..... 125/100
Quarter page (3.7x4.9)..... 70/50
Eighth page (3.7x2.4)..... 45/30
Business card special..... 30/20

Horizontal strip ads: \$55 first two inches; \$20 each additional inch. Vertical: \$75 first two inches; \$25 each additional inch.

2-line ad (members only), first three months free, then \$5/issue. Additional lines \$5/issue.

Membership information changes, newsletter delivery problems, etc., can be made by writing Senior Tennis Players Club, P.O. Box 5525, Hopkins, MN 55343 or email dsommer7@usiwireless.com.

November 2013, Vol. 26, #9

Membership total: 1272

©2013 Senior Tennis Players Club. All rights reserved.



SENIOR TENNIS PLAYERS CLUB
The 50+ tennis experience

Steve Wilkinson in Tennis Hall of Fame

Steve Wilkinson, TLC's founder and visionary, was inducted into the USPTA Hall of Fame, September 27, with two other tennis legends, **Vic Braden** (left) and **Nick Bollettieri** (center). Only 16 people have ever received this honor (including Steve's friend and life influence, **Arthur Ashe**). Steve gave a fine acceptance speech, summing up his life philosophy:

"I am honored to accept induction into USPTA Hall of Fame. My membership number is 869, so I have been part of this tremendous organization for a long time. I remember especially my presidency of the Northern section, when we doubled the membership and prioritized women recruits. Prior to that,

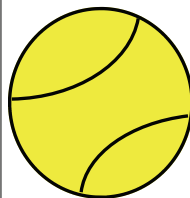
our section had been an 'old boys club.'

"Also, I cherish my seventeen years on the national executive committee. Leading workshops and coaches clinics ranked high on my



(Hall of Fame—continued on page 3)

As a non-profit organization, the Senior Tennis Players Club gratefully accepts donations, memorials and estate gifts. Please send to Senior Tennis Players Club, P.O. Box 5525, Hopkins, MN 55343.



Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the STPC is to provide tennis playing opportunities to people 50 and older for their mental, physical, and social well-being; and to support the growth of tennis.

Newsletter Submissions

To help make the newsletter as correct as possible, please submit all items in writing only, by mail or email. The deadline is the 15th of the month for publication the following month. All material submitted for publication is subject to editing. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want materials returned.

Send your submissions to:

David Sommer, 3657 17th Avenue S, Minneapolis, MN 55407.
Email: dsommer7@usiwireless.com.

Opinions expressed in articles, letters or advertisements are those of the author, and do not necessarily represent views of the newsletter editor or the Board or officers of STPC.

Mark's corner

By Mark Mudra



(Hall of Fame—continued from page 2)

priority list.

“Now I’m completing a book titled LET LOVE SERVE, a Memoir Celebrating Tennis and Life. It explains my values-oriented approach to tennis and to all of life. The approach guided me as I directed Tennis and Life Camps, which has served over 50,000 students for the past 37 years. It focuses on what we call the Three Crowns at Tennis & Life Camps, the only three things that we can control. Our attitude, our effort, and our sportsmanship. We cannot control winning or we would choose to win every time. We cannot control playing well or we would chose to play well every time. And we cannot control another person’s behavior, only our own choice to treat others the way we want to be treated on and off the court. My values-oriented approach was fundamental for my collegiate coaching, teaching of sport ethics and world religions, and my own tennis playing.

“Tennis is uniquely suited for teaching values that apply to life. Consider the difference between tennis and most other sports. In tennis, The Code requires us to give our opponent every benefit of the doubt. The Code offers a trust-building approach to tennis...and to life. On the other hand, athletes in many sports are encouraged to get away with anything that a referee is not in position to call.

(Hall of Fame—continued on page 5)

I recently attended a USTA coaching seminar with several of our STPC coaches. The major point was: your improvement at tennis is directly related to the amount of practice of proper tennis techniques.

The Lifetime programs we are developing stress these two points, practice and focused skill development.

To learn about this program, *see pages 7 & 8 for the White Bear and Bloomington South programs*. Or attend one of our open houses—*see page 5*. The new improved unlimited tennis offer from Lifetime in White Bear Lake is fantastic! For \$139.99 a month you can play unlimited tennis 7-9 AM **and** 2-4 PM 5 days a week Monday thru Friday. This also includes a free weekly drill: Thursday 8-9:30 AM taught by STPC pro Denny Wagner. See all the details on page 7.

Last year I had several players who were 2.5 at the start of the program and by summer were playing at a 4.0 level. The ability to play/hit with better players, free hitting on the ball machine, and instructors that focus on your tennis/fitness development pays dividends to someone who really wants to improve.

Senior Tennis Players Club now offers **over 300 hours** of fall indoor drills See page four for a complete schedule or check it out on our website. Now included is a map to each location. These classes are for all levels, and cost only \$7.00 (\$4.50 for the Baseline class). All are drop in drills, no reservations needed to attend, just show up and play.

Each month our coaches will focus on one skill; other strokes will be included but more time will be spent on the selected stroke/skill.

Skill for November: return of serve

- Hybrid shot—not volley and not ground stroke
- Short back swing
- Move thru the shot
- See ball early (at the toss).

We are looking to expand our relationship with St. Kates in summer. Anyone with a contact there that can help us get courts on Saturdays please contact me.

Any questions pertaining to any of the above please contact me. Mark Mudra, markmudra@aol.com.

Players wanted

Mondays 10:00-11:30, Fred Wells, 3.5+ women. Need subs. Call Georgia Mroska 612-724-4909.

Fridays, 9:00-11:00, Fred Wells, 3.0-3.5 MW. Subs wanted for a great mixed doubles group. Contact Caryl Minnetti 952-884-5136.

Want ads

Two-line want ads are available to all STPC members. Your ad is free for three issues. After that, there is a charge of \$5 per publication.

Time for summer/fall project? Bathroom update, kitchen, paint, tile, lighting/electrical, plumbing. High quality attention to detail. Home improvement specialist. Eric Ostergaard, 612-710-7055 ericostergaard@yahoo.com.

2 Greek homes 3BR 2.5BA near Nafplio. €770-€994/wk. MN owner Sally Howard. Details greekhomes.net.

Want to rent: Garage stall or shed space for compact car, Nov-Mar. Jeanne.rahe@gmail.com 952 649-0727.





Senior Tennis Players Club, Indoor Lesson Season

The 50+ Tennis Experience

www.seniortennismn.com. Revised 8/22/2013

Lessons and drills—September through April

Just drop in—all levels welcome.

Questions? Contact Mark Mudra, Director of Training: markmudra@aol.com

Day	Location	Time	Instructor, Phone, Email	Cost
Mon	Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-825-6844	1:30-3:00 PM	HP, 612-590-0181, hunghuyphan@gmail.com Duncan Welty 952-933-8592 idwelty@q.com	\$7.00
Tue	Life Time 98th St – only open to Life Time Members. FREE for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$7.00 for others. Instructional class (3.0 level and below) 952-830-7900.	8:00-9:00 AM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$7.00
	Life Time 98th St – only open to Life Time members. FREE for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$7.00 for others. 3.5+ level players only. 952-830-7900.	9:00-10:30 AM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$7.00
	Public Indoor Tennis , 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109.	1:00-2:30 PM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$7.00
Wed	Baseline Tennis Center , 1815 4th St SE, Mpls, 612-625-1433. No lessons Oct 23 & 30! NOTE: starting 11/13/2013 time will be 9:30-11:00 AM.	Noon-1:30 PM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$4.50
	Williston Fitness & Sports , 14509 Minnetonka Drive, Minnetonka 952-939-8370.	5:30-7:00 PM	Duane Ryman 612-865-9517 dhrtennis40@hotmail.com	\$7.00
Thu	Life Time Fitness White Bear Lake – only open to Life Time members. FREE for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$7.00 for others. 4800 White Bear Pkwy, White Bear Lake, MN 651-426-1308.	8:00-9:30 AM, Start 10/10/13	Denny Wagner, 612-578-8477 dennis8477@gmail.com	\$7.00
	Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center . 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis, 612-825-6844	8:30-10:00 AM	Paul Stormo 952-944-6286 pjstormo@aol.com Dilcia Pederson 612-824-6099 dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org	\$7.00
Fri	Life Time 98th St – only open to Life Time members. FREE for Unlimited Tennis Pass; \$7.00 for others. 3.5+ level players only.	8:00-9:30 AM	Mike Johnson or his staff	\$7.00
	Public Indoor Tennis , 7833 Highway 65 N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432. 763-231-3109.	1:00-2:30 PM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$7.00
Sat	Life Time Fitness, White Bear Lake . Open houses 11/16/13, 12/21/13, 1/18/14, 2/15/14, 3/15/14, 4/19/14 for all STPC members.	2:00-4:00 PM	Mark Mudra 952-833-1469 markmudra@aol.com	\$7.00

Drill of the Month

Each month our instructors will focus on one stroke. Other strokes will be included as well, but more time will be spent on the selected stroke. See Mark's Corner in the monthly newsletter to determine what stroke is featured.

Stroke sequence:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1.The volley | 5.Return of serve |
| 2.Forehand ground stroke | 6.Doubles play |
| 3.Backhand ground stroke | 7.Advanced doubles play |
| 4.The serve | 8.Singles |



Senior Tennis Players Club

The 50+ Tennis Experience

Presents Saturday afternoon tennis! You do not need to be a member of Life Time to attend.

Two hours of tennis at a great facility. All levels of players welcome. We will have courts for 4.0, 3.5, 3.0 and 2.5 players. No reservations—just show up and play.

When: Saturdays 11/16/13, 12/21/13, 1/18/14, 2/15/14, 3/15/14, 4/19/14; 2:00-4:00 PM (please be there at 1:45 to pay and sign in).

Where: [White Bear Lake Life Time Fitness](#), 4800 White Bear Parkway, 651-292-2300

Cost: \$7.00

Format:

- Drills: 4 Ball, Mudra Drill, Mudra with serve drill, Coach feed—Ground/ approach/volley. Gopher drill.
- Rotational /Second ball doubles

Featured skill of the month: October—volley, November—serve, December—ground stroke forehand, January—ground stroke backhand, February—return of serve, March—doubles play, April—singles play

Name tags and court assignments at registration

Questions? Mark Mudra, Director of Tennis markmudra@aol.com

●● Private Club Drills Open to STPC Members ●●				
Location	Day	Cost	Time	Information
Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center 4005 Nicollet Ave S, Minneapolis	Tue Thu	\$12.00	9:00-10:00 AM	Call 612-825-6844 for reservation.
Williston Fitness & Sports 14509 Minnetonka Dr. Minnetonka, MN 55345	Mon	Williston member \$10, non-member \$14	Senior 2.0-2.5 Tennis Clinic 3:00-4:00	Call front desk to sign up: 952-939-8370
	Wed		Senior Tennis Clinic 8:00-9:00 am	
	Fri		Senior Focused Play & Critique 8:00-9:00 am	

(Hall of Fame—continued from page 3)

“I was fortunate to have been influenced by Arthur Ashe during my time on the tour. He persuaded me to never challenge opponents’ line calls—either verbally or with body language. In other words, he taught me how

to communicate trust, and how to play within myself, not worrying about the things outside my control.

“Again, thank you. It is a special privilege to be inducted together with Nick and Vic, two outstanding pros who have contributed so much to tennis.”

(Tennis events—continued from page 1)

Marcia Bach, former USTA Northern Executive Director from Bloomington and **Susie Neet** of Minneapolis, long-time volunteer at Fred Wells and InnerCity Tennis were recently inducted into the USTA Northern Hall Of Fame. Bach has over 30 years of service with USTA Northern including the Board of Directors (1982-87) and as the first full-time employee as Executive Director (1987-2003). Neet has been a long-time player and volunteer for over 30 years. She continues to coach high school tennis and was the volunteer coordinator for the Boston Scientific Women's Tournament from 1999-2007. **Steve Wilkinson**, St. Peter, **Nick Bollettieri** and **Vic Braden** were recently inducted into the US Professional Tennis Association Hall of Fame. Wilkinson was the head coach at Gustavus Adolphus for 39 years from 1971-2009 and is the winningest coach in the history of men's college tennis with 923 victories. He founded Tennis and Life clinics/camps over 25 years ago. Bollettieri is on the Board of Directors of InnerCity Tennis and has worked with 10 players that have achieved a #1 world ranking. Braden is a nationally recognized former player, writer, coach and TV personality.

High school girls

Sectional tournaments were being played as this article was submitted for publication. The final State Coaches Association rankings had Breck, St. James and Rochester Lourdes in the top 3 in Class 1A and Edina, Minnetonka and Rochester Mayo in Class 2A. Edina is favored again to win their 17th consecutive state title. The Hornets had some close matches against Minnetonka and Wayzata in Lake Conference play. **Jim Paulsen**, in a Star Tribune article in August, suggested that the difference in individual talent at the top may not be that great when comparing Class 1A and 2A. The two High School Singles Champions from 2012, Mounds View senior Summer Brills in Class 2A and Sonya Das from St. Paul Academy in Class 1A both live in the Mounds View school district and played on USTA teams during the summer. They split their first two USTA matches against each other in straight sets.

Djokovic tops in China

Novak Djokovic completed a sweep of titles in the China Open in Beijing and the Shanghai Masters in both

2012 and 2013. He took out a strong-playing **Juan Martin del Potro** 6-1, 3-6, 7-6(3). The 5th-ranked del Potro upset **Rafael Nadal** in the semi-final 6-2, 6-4. He probably played the best match of his life against Nadal, hitting with power and few mistakes.

Gopher tennis

Men's head coach, **Geoff Young** is returning for his 8th season, and will be assisted by former Gopher, **Reven Stephens**. Last season they compiled a record of 15-11, including a 9-2 Big Ten record. They ended the season with a loss to Virginia, the eventual national championship team. The roster for the 2013-2014 season includes two Minnesota players; **Eric Frueh**, a junior from Rochester and **Tucker Saxon**, a junior from Dellwood. The roster includes four players from the USA and five players from foreign countries. Watch the Gopher Invitational October 31 thru November 3.

The Gopher women will be lead by **Chuck Merzbacher**, head coach, in his second year and assistant **Whitney Taney**. The women's roster includes two Minnesota players: **Kelsey Frechette**, a sophomore from Rochester and **Aria Lambert**, a junior from Deephaven. The roster includes five players from the USA and six players from foreign countries. In October, the Gopher women finished with a 15-15 singles record and a 8-10 doubles record in the Wildcat Invitational in Evanston, Illinois. In top flight singles play **Natalia Pintusava** and **Tereza Birchacova** lost semi-final matches and finished third in their respective flights. Gopher women will again compete in the Kitty Harrison Invitational in Chapel Hill, NC, November 8-10. The 2014 home schedule will start on January 19 against Eastern Michigan and Northern Iowa. Select dates from the Gopher home schedule below to take advantage of the best tennis value in the Twin Cities.

Gopher Men Tennis		
Gopher Invitational, Oct 31 to Nov 3, all day		
01/31/14	Wisconsin-Green Bay	Noon
	Marquette	6:00 pm
02/02/14	Arkansas	Noon
02/07/14	Tulsa	6:00 pm
02/08/14	Harvard	3:00 pm
02/22/14	Drake	6:00 pm
03/01/14	Wisconsin	1:00 pm
03/23/14	Nebraska	Noon
04/04/14	Ohio State	3:00 pm
04/06/14	Penn State	Noon
04/11/14	Michigan	6:00 pm
04/13/14	Michigan State	Noon

Gopher Women Tennis		
01/19/14	Eastern Michigan	Noon
	Northern Iowa	6:30 pm
01/26/14	North Dakota	10:00 am
	South Dakota St.	4:00 pm
02/14/14	Oklahoma State	5:00 pm
02/16/14	Oregon	11:00 am
02/21/14	Iowa State	6:00 pm
02/23/14	Marshall	11:00 am
	Carleton College	6:00 pm
03/23/14	Iowa	3:00 pm
03/28/14	Purdue	5:00 pm
03/30/14	Indiana	11:00 am
04/18/14	Illinois	3:00 pm
04/20/14	Northwestern	Noon

No court fees to play 5 days a week, Monday-Friday 7:00-9:00 AM and 2:00-4:00 PM

Life Time/Senior Tennis Unlimited Tennis Pass

- For \$139.95 a month you can play unlimited tennis, 7:00-9:00 AM **and** 2:00-4:00 PM Monday through Friday at [Life Time White Bear Lake](#). Couples membership just \$229.95.
- This includes a free weekly drill—Monday 2:00-3:30 PM taught by Mark Mudra, Director of Training, or his STPC/Life Time-approved USPTA-certified staff
- Free use of ball machine during the 2:00-4:00 PM time slot

This offer is only available to members of Senior Tennis Players Club.

Life Time White Bear Lake offers 10 inside courts all fall-spring season.

This Unlimited Tennis Pass includes free access to all Onyx level services offered by Life Time White Bear Lake anytime the club is open: weight room, pool, spinning, yoga, etc.

STPC members can go inactive or drop out, with only a 30 day notice.

No initiation fees to join this program.

For questions or additional information contact:

Mark Mudra

Markmudra@aol.com

952-833-1469

Please sign up for this program with Life Time:

Evelynda Swope

eswope@lifetimefitness.com

651-292-2312

Tip from a pro

By Taylor Hanson, pro at Reed-Sweatt

The quality of one's footwork has a tremendous influence on performance at all levels of play. Improved footwork leads to better balance, court position, and control of the ball. My experience with senior tennis players has taught me that improved footwork is often the low-lying fruit for those who wish to improve their game and their physical fitness. I have found that many seniors have become quite adept at hitting shots with minimal movement, in some cases hitting shots without



taking even one step. A simple way to improve your game is to take just one more step than you usually would when moving to hit a shot, and one additional step following the shot. If you can do this, you will likely find that several additional steps are often possible, and your balance and court coverage will improve significantly. Superior balance and mobility will grant you greater control over your rallies, so that it will be your opponents scrambling for balls rather than you!

Life Time 50+ \$99 Unlimited Tennis Club



Life Time Fitness – Bloomington South is proud to partner once again with the Senior Tennis Players Club and offer a special membership with the following details:

- Full Membership to Life Time Fitness – Bloomington South (including the fitness floor, pool, spinning, yoga, tennis, etc.)
- Unlimited Tennis 7:00-9:00AM Sunday thru Friday
- Free use of ball machine during the 7-9 AM time slot
- Free Tuesday 3.5 Drill 9:00-10:30AM

- Free Friday 3.5 Drill 8:00-9:30AM

Existing Platinum-level Life Time Fitness Members can upgrade for less than \$40 a month, and receive all of the benefits listed above.

Brian Opatz bopatz@lifetimefitness.com 952 830 7905

Jeff Martin jmartin1@lifetimefitness.com 952 830 7911

The Perrys' passionate performances

By Felix Perry (with Barbara)

We are not “spring chickens.” I am 94; Barbara is 91. The John Marshall Jr.-Sr. high school that we both attended was located two blocks from the U of M main campus. Barbara graduated with a BA degree; Felix with a B Aero Engineering degree. We married in 1943. Barbara’s last UMN quarter was a struggle traveling cross-town on streetcars in mid-pregnancy. Northwest Airlines grabbed Felix immediately on graduation in 1942, the middle of WWII. Felix left NWA for 2 years service (1944-1946) as a Lt. (JG) in the U.S. Navy Air Transport Service doing what he had been doing for NWA. He was fortunate in not getting shot at and in seeing Barbara and his first child every weekend.

He returned to his same job at NWA after the war. The total span of his job at NWA was 48 years. He was a manager in the same job which began with seven DC-3’s and ended with hundreds of jets. He had the technical responsibility for the structure and passenger accommodations of all the aircraft operated by NWA. One unusual activity was when he helicoptered into the Florida Everglades to the crash site of a NWA Boeing 720B to pick up the pieces and assemble parts of the structure to determine the cause. Barbara produced five children and ran the household full time. Then, she



worked as a secretary part time for the League of Women Voters of Minneapolis for 15 years after the children had mostly left the nest. We put four of them through college. Child #4, who was a struggle due to his severe retardation and epilepsy, eventually died in a MN state institution. We have lived in the same house since 1948, expanding it many times to accommodate our expanding family and needs. After 70 years of an always happy marriage, we are still in love. We keep peace by sharing routine chores, having separate

computer rooms and playing as regulars in separate tennis groups twice a week during indoor season at Reed Sweatt. During the summer, Barbara played twice a week at Augsburg, but took Mondays off to play golf at Wirth Golf Course. Felix played tennis many summers at Donaldson Park in Richfield, but only infrequently this year when he favored in-line skating and biking at Lake Harriet.

Felix’s bionic body has a plastic aorta heart valve, two metal knee joints and plastic inserts in his eyes. Age has slowed his tennis reactions an amount hardly discernible from his normal ineptness. Barbara’s all-women’s groups are physically able to play competitively 2½ hours every week. Doubles tennis has for many years provided us the most frequent, the most predictable, the most pleasant, the most mentally-sharpening, physically-stimulating and the most social activity.

Tennis players' quirks, tics, & superstitions

By Bill Cosgrove

If you watched some of the Rogers Open in Montreal or the Southern & Western Open in Cincinnati in August, you got a great chance to see the return of **Raphael Nadal** to the tour for the first time since his first round loss at Wimbledon in June and taking a month or so off. You also got a chance to see quite a lot of him close up on TV.

Did it seem to you that his physical eccentricities were more conspicuous, especially in his service preparation? They were always obviously there, but now they seem more pronounced and maybe greater in number than ever. They were especially noticeable, perhaps, in the 3-set semifinal against **Novak Djokovic** in Montreal and his final against **John Isner** in Cincinnati the following week.

Nadal's serving quirks and tics are interesting and novel, human and even endearing, perhaps, like the man himself. It's compelling to think what meaning, if any, they may have for him—why he does them. Or even if he knows he's doing them. Surely he does, doesn't he?

Though his quirks may well be the most pronounced ones that tennis players indulge in these days, they are certainly not the worst there have ever been. Consider a few of the worst, or best, quirks from tennis history, though I can't vouch personally for or say I've seen all of them.

Incidentally, what I'm calling quirks do not include the unwarranted, extreme shrieking of a very few players in today's game. Hard to know what to make of them, if only because their unprovoked screams are something very close to hindrances to the other player, or anyone with normal hearing playing in the near vicinity. Can these gratuitous screams even be called quirks, tics, or superstitions? The terms seem inadequate to the invasiveness of the sounds themselves.

These shrieks should be distinguished from the load grunts of exertion, effort, and exhaustion commonly heard in the fourth and fifth sets of long, hard-fought matches, such as between Djokovic and **Wawrinka** in this year's Open semifinal. But what's the difference between gratuitous shrieks and exertion grunts? Men's Open final, second set, sixth game, Nadal and Djokovic play a 54-stroke rally in which their topspin, high energy, all-out strokes cause various kinds of grunts while their more cautious, measured, slice backhands

don't. It's maximum physical exertion and effort that ebb and flow that can justify invasive noises, not self-indulgent, bad habits. Such grunts are for cause, such shrieks are from habit. But apparently no one is able or willing to try to control, forbid, or stop them. So maybe we'll have to consider only non-invasive weirdness, and quirks that do not impinge on anyone else's space.

Anyway, here are some selections of the best, or worst, examples of quirks and tics I've so far managed to find. Sports Illustrated has a delightful article about major quirks of modern players from Rafa's pants picking (which we've all seen) to **Dominika Cibulkova's** smelling of new balls before serving them (haven't seen this one myself so I'll have to take their word for it) to **Richard Gasquet's** alleged re-gripping of his racket during almost every changeover.

But I'm thinking more about some of the historical oddities that most of us haven't had a chance to see for ourselves. **Suzanne Lenglen**, for example, the undisputed queen of women's tennis in the 1920s, is reputed to have drunk brandy during matches, competed with bare arms (perish the thought), and to have worn short skirts with no petticoats, all the while, incidentally, usually demolishing her opponents.

Jean Borotra, "the Bounding Basque" and one of the original French "Four Musketeers," wore a beret while playing his matches. Rene Lacoste, another Musketeer, he of the crocodile shirt, got his famous nickname and croc symbol from a crocodile skin suitcase that he won on a tennis bet. And he did something for tennis that's not exactly a quirk or tic, though some may say otherwise. He patented in 1963 the first tubular steel tennis racket that became the T2000.

As for quirks closer to our own time, one **Art Larsen**, men's champion at the U.S. Nationals in 1950, had a habit of touching everything he could with his racket, from the ball boys to the net, his opponent, and the umpire. They were apparently light, good-natured love-taps, but he did it so compulsively as to be nicknamed Tappy. **Jack Kramer** said of Tappy Larsen that he had taken up tennis as mental therapy after long periods of fighting on the front lines in World War II, and that "sometimes he would chat with an imaginary bird that sat on his shoulder."

Even closer to home, perhaps, is a player many of us may recall seeing some years ago who you just knew was, well, eccentric, if only because he looked the part. **Goran Ivanisevic** in the 1990s was one of the early big men with a booming serve of whom there are so many

(Tennis quirks, tics, superstitions—continued on page 10)

(Tennis quirks, tics, superstitions—continued from page 9)

more today. An imposing-looking Croatian, he won Wimbledon as a wild card in 2001, beating **Patrick Rafter**, and apparently had quirks that may not have been entirely evident to a TV audience.

During changeovers, Goran always saw to it that he was the second person to get up from his chair. And, like many players, he avoided stepping on lines while walking back on the court. But he had one unusual quirk shared with relatively few other players—when he served an ace, which was rather often because of his huge, lefty serve, he insisted on getting that same ball back for his next serve. **Conchita Martínez**, herself a former Wimbledon women's champion in 1994, also wanted the same ball back after she had won a point so she could serve it again. One annoyed opponent took to pocketing the ball so she couldn't use it again.

Off the court, Goran apparently got even weirder. The day after he won a match, it is said that he would try to do everything that day exactly the way he had done it the day before, including “wearing the same clothes, eating the same food, and talking to the same people.” Many other players over the years have also had similar quirks about the food they eat during tournaments, including **Tim Mayotte, Tracy Austin, Jack Sock, Donald Young**.

Maybe one last example of a quirk, a personal one, which, in this case, almost made it impossible to even *play* tennis. One fellow in our Northern Section back in the 80's and 90's would serve by standing behind the baseline about 6-8 feet, sort of hop-skip-run toward the court, and then serve the ball just before getting up to the line. Usually he over-ran the baseline so much that he couldn't compete in legitimate matches and tournaments.

I knew another fellow back in the day who served with his left hand and then switched the racket to his right to play out the point. Not exactly a quirk since, in his case, he couldn't lift his right arm high enough to serve due to an accident that required reconstructive surgery. So, he taught himself to serve left-handed but played otherwise right handed. What he did for an overhead I never found out.

There are plenty of world-class players, though, whose personal quirks and tics we may remember and have observed personally—**Connors, McEnroe, Agassiz, Sampras, Federer, Djokovic, Murray, Sharapova, Venus, Serena**.... In today's game, or at least in the modern open era, Nadal's qualify as certainly among the best, or worst. Which is really saying something.

So, let's take a quick look at Nadal's well-known and

widely-observed service ritual quirks as we may have seen them in person or on TV at his recent 2013 tournaments in Montreal, Cincinnati, or at the U. S. Open. Check these against your own observations of his obsessive-compulsive rituals.

As Nadal steps up to the baseline to serve, he has three balls in his hand, like a lot of other players. Then he drops one, slaps it back to the ball person, and slips the second ball into his pocket very quickly. Now he's ready for his own truly unique pre-service ritual.

With his right hand Rafa tugs at the back of his shorts, pulls up on his shirt atop his left shoulder, then the same on his right shoulder, rubs his nose with a pinching motion, smoothly tucks back his hair above his left ear, returns to pinching his nose, then to the hair above the right ear – all this while bouncing the ball with his racket. The Rafa Ritual. It's done very quickly, taking little more than 5-7 seconds. Now he's ready to serve.

So, it's not really the Rafa Ritual itself that gets him into hot water with the chair umpire for taking too much time. In fact, he may have speeded up the 7-step process to try to stay within the 20-second serving requirement, which may also explain why he came up with the 2-towel strategy for his nearly compulsive wipe downs.

It's tempting to say he does all these things the same way every time, before every serve, in the same order, faithfully. But, no, he doesn't. Well, yes and no. In the second to last point of the match in the Rogers Open final against **Milos Raonic** he actually skipped both shoulders in the routine, for some reason. He does not appear to vary the ritual very often, however, at least on the first serve. When he does shorten it, it's usually skipping the shoulders on the second serve.

And it's not just that he does it when he is serving. In the Roger's Open final, he performed the entire pre-service ritual just before receiving some of Raonic's first serves; and then a shortened version before receiving some second serves. In at least one instance early in the second set of that final while receiving serve, he went through his entire routine—left shoulder, right shoulder, nose, left ear, nose, right ear—except that he started it all off by plucking at the front of his shorts instead of the back. I hadn't noticed that before.

Then the following week in the Southern & Western Open in Cincinnati in the quarter final against **Grigor Dimitrov**, third set, seventh game, receiving serve he

(Tennis quirks, tics, superstitions—continued on page 12)

STPC new members, renewals, and changes

Name Rating Primary phone Other phone Address, Email, Member #

Member personal information is not available on this website.

(Tennis quirks, tics, superstitions—continued from page 10)

went through his entire Rafa Ritual **very** fast—but only after tugging first at the front of his shorts and then at the back. And in the final against **John Isner**, Nadal also performed the entire ritual on a number of critical points when receiving serve. On first match point, which Isner won, Rafa performed only a modified version, but then Nadal served out the tiebreak for the match. It all works for him considering the results.

So far in this year's U.S. Open, Nadal has exhibited some of the same variations in his serving ritual as in Montreal and Cincinnati. In the semi-final against Gasquet, he went through the entire ritual when receiving serve in the 3rd set just before Gasquet double-faulted for the match. Similarly, in the final against Djokovic, he appeared to do the entire Rafa Ritual before receiving every serve in the opening game.

Additionally, when entering the court for his 2nd round Open match, he seemed to stutter step over two imaginary lines, one at the end of the tunnel leading into the court, and the other an imaginary extension of the end of the net on the way to his chair. Have you noticed, too, that he throws his wristbands to the crowd after his wins with his right hand not his left? Not a quirk but a remnant of his original right-

handedness.

I have to say along here somewhere that there's nothing off-putting or offensive about any of this Rafa Ritual. It's all done very fast, smoothly, un-self-consciously, non-dramatically—that is, ritualistically.

It seems to be so elaborate and idiosyncratic that it relegates his other repeated actions almost to mere garden-variety habits (except perhaps for the water bottle alignments by his chair). We've all seen his kangaroo jump and dodging-and-ducking like a boxer while going to the net for the coin flip, shaking hands with everyone, and then sprinting, bobbing-and-weaving, like a running back in a broken field to the back line to receive serve.

Then after the match, he removes his headband, shakes out his long hair, peels off his shirt courtside, and puts on a zipper jacket with no shirt under it. And finally he shakes out his hair again in preparation for the awards ceremony and TV interviews. At this year's U. S. Open, however, Nadal opted for a grey t-shirt and no jacket for his on-court interview after his 2nd round win. He doesn't always answer directly the questions he's asked, but he's very good at making positive, optimistic, even uplifting comments about his opponent and the match—certainly gracious, even to a fault, perhaps.