VOLUME 2

SUMMER
'26

MBF INSIDER

News, Updates & More from Marin Bocce

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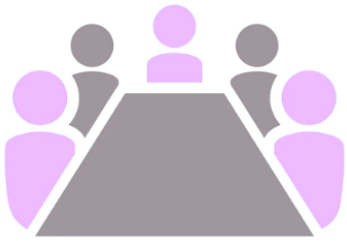




photos by *kmrtists*

Content Contributors: MBF Staff, Board & Players
Editor & Graphic Design: Karla Rodebush (aka *kmrtists)*

From the President of the Board



Marin Bocce is a special place.

You only need to take a couple steps inside its gates to see what a beautifully-designed, well-maintained facility it is. But that just scratches the surface; not everyone is aware of its deep and rich history.

This newsletter features interviews with community members who've been involved since the beginning. They helped this community take root and shape what it is today (see feature articles for more about this).

I am grateful to the Board and Staff for all they do to maintain a beautiful, safe and enjoyable environment for everyone. Our community relies on their foundation of support, and that's one reason younger players are forming teams and joining league play. It's exciting to see this growth in the community. Many of them are the next generation of long-time players on legacy teams like I Duci, La Famiglia, and Romeos.

I also want to extend a special thanks to the volunteer instructors offering free lessons and clinics to MBF league players who want to improve their playing skills. This group of board-approved instructors have remarkable credentials, including experience competing in regional and national championships and international competition. I'm thrilled this program has been so well-received since it kicked off in early August. This is community-building in progress!

Happy rolling!

Jeff Tremolada

President,
Marin Bocce Federation



FRIENDLY REMINDER

Please use ONLY the following email addresses to communicate with MBF:

- **mbf@marinbocce.org**
- **mbfboard@marinbocce.org**
- **invoices@marinbocce.org**

Thank you!

Congratulations to Our Summer League MORNING CHAMPIONS!

MONDAY
Upper:
Una Bella Mattina
Lower:
Lidos

WEDNESDAY
Upper:
Shamrocks
Lower:
Andiamo

THURSDAY
Upper:
Holy Cannoli
Lower:
Italian Athletic Club #1

... and Morning Tournament Winners!

MON UPPER



Brava Ragazzi Sir

MON LOWER



Bocce Di Amore

WED UPPER



Pompieri

WED LOWER



Vincitori

THUR UPPER



Boccismo

THUR LOWER



Forza Italia

2026 Evening League Winning Teams

Congratulations Summer League EVENING CHAMPS!



MONDAY
Upper (L):
Bocceholics
Lower (R):
I Duci

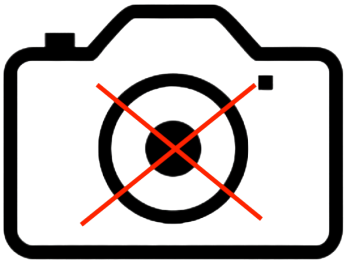


TUESDAY
Upper:
Great Balls of Fire
Lower:
Deboccery

WEDNESDAY
Upper:
Bocce &Biscotti
Lower:
MC Rollers



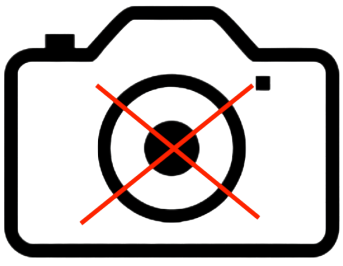
THURSDAY
Upper: **Vasco**
Lower: **I Veneti**



requested no photo



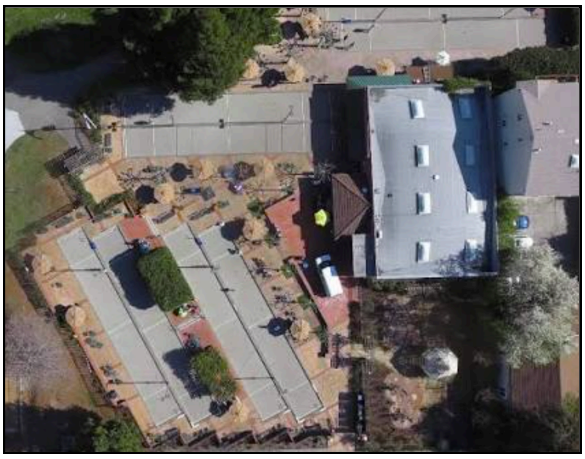
FRIDAY
Upper:
Rolling Thunder
Lower:
Saturday Danger



requested no photo

Building a Legacy, Brick by Brick

Upon first stepping into Marin Bocce, most people notice the beautiful grounds and landscaping and the perfectly manicured courts. But what they don't see is the rich and vibrant history and vision that went into making this place. We interviewed some of the earliest members and contributors to this facility, who came from various backgrounds and experience, yet were largely from an Italian community that loved bocce–it was their hard work and dedication that brought this facility to life and carries it into the future and to next generations.



Aerial shot of the MBF facility



Carol & Chuck Podesta

Part One: The Podesta Family

Carol and Chuck Podesta were among the crew of volunteers who showed up whenever something needed doing in the early days. Chuck became known as the "fix-it guy." His business ties to Fisherman's Wharf and the Festa Italiana–of which he was a board member for 13 years–connected him with Marin Bocce as it was first being built in 1994. Chuck learned to play bocce from the Italians at Fisherman's Wharf and the Aquatic Park.

When they learned he would be attending the Festa Italiana, they told him he *had* to learn to play bocce. So, Chuck says he "learned the hard way." Carol used to be a bowler and easily picked bocce up and "loved every minute of it."



Carol and Chuck with Team I Duci 2026

Chuck and Carol both remember Dolly Nave as the person who got it all started, rallying Mayor Al Boro's office and local businesses like Ghilotti Brothers and Golden State Lumber, as well as everyday San Rafael families around the shared vision to improve Albert Park by adding bocce courts. "Dolly had the brainstorm of selling each bocce court for $10,000–and they did it!–by tapping into their collective connections. "Things just started to fall into place," Carol remembers, "and it was a beautiful thing to see and be a part of."

Carol took charge of selling the very first commemorative bricks. Each member of the Podesta family has a brick at the facility–including Toots (daughter), whose memorial service was held at the facility after she passed. "Toots worked in the office and was there all the time, day and night," they remember. "Bocce was like family to her. When she passed, there were more cards from bocce people than anyone else." The brick tradition continues today, most recently celebrated this past July with the reveal of a new installation of custom-printed bricks.

[See "Commemorative Bricks" p. 11]

(Podesta cont'd)

Early Memories



Jessica Podesta
Captain, I Duci (MON PM)

Chuck remembers "In the beginning, there was temporary fencing, no concrete, just gravel, and no lights. Back then you had to win by two points, so when games lasted into the dark, we'd hold light sticks next to the pallino so you could see where you were going."

Bob Podesta (son) recalls we "used to bring a portable bocce court to the Marin County Fair to teach people to play. We worked in shifts to teach people–that was a fun time." Also, "My wedding was in the rose garden, and for the reception we bought a whole bunch of sandals so everybody could kick off their heels and fancy shoes to play bocce. That was a great day!"



Bob, Jessica and
Vinnie Podesta

Jessica (granddaughter) was in the womb while her mother played, so she doesn't know any of time in her life without bocce. Recently she saw a kid, maybe eight years old, jumping on and off the brick wall in front of the office, and thought: "Wow, that was me as a kid!" It was such an intense, nostalgic feeling for her, she got emotional thinking about it.

Vinnie (grandson) remembers: "You guys (Jessica and Bob) trying to teach me how to play bocce when I was three years old and I wasn't getting it. But I'm excited to play on a team when I'm 18 years old."

Carol loves that "bocce is an ancient game still going strong today."

Chuck reflected on a particularly special moment when a woman in a wheelchair watched a bocce game from outside the fence. "I invited her in to try a throw," he says, "and she and her husband joined a team not long after–one of many longtime players with disabilities who play at the courts today."

Chuck Podesta oversaw the building of MBF's wheelchair accessible court and a special PVC pipe ramp lined with foam to slow the ball's speed so it doesn't roll past the target—a precursor to the modern ramps used today in Paralympics, which made "boccia" an official sport in 1984.



"We've had people in wheelchairs play here, and once someone complained that they always got to use the same court," so,(Podesta) said, "When you're in a wheelchair, you can use the same court, too."

Podesta cares deeply about the Special Olympics and Paralympics and wishes they had more visibility.

Click **LINK** for Marin IJ article

See **VIDEO**



Building a Legacy, Brick by Brick (cont'd)

Part Two:
Rae Mignola's Story





Rae Mignola, Vespa Model



Rae Mignola

Rae (Allen) Mignola's path to bocce began as a newly widowed woman looking for something to fill her time. While chatting with her friend, **Kay Michelis**, after a meeting in North Beach, Rae mentioned she had just moved to San Rafael to be near her daughter (**Lisa Pena**). Kay said, "Perfect! You should try playing bocce–that's where the courts are." Kay introduced Rae to Dolly Nave, and Rae joined Dolly's team not long after. She remembers Dolly as endlessly welcoming, "someone who didn't just come in to play and leave; she was very involved in developing the facility."

Rae has an interesting background. She was raised in a San Francisco dance school (studied ballet and tap) and was a professional model for Vespa scooters (they recognized her spark) back in the day. Ahead of her time, she also taught the first barre classes long before they became the trend they are today.

Rae also did significant fundraising for many reputable organizations over the years, including the annual "Jewel Ball" for the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital; the Curry Senior Center; and the **San Francisco Columbus Day/Italian Heritage Celebration & Parade**, the longest-running celebration of its kind in the nation (established in 1868). Rae took on all responsibilities for its annual Queen Isabella beauty pageant working with all the queens and their courts, and was anointed with the well-earned title of "Queen Mother" (Queen Mother Emerita today). Rae is a Past President and served on the board of the Columbus Day Celebration for over four decades. In gratitude for her dedicated work, the Colombo Club of Marin made her an honorary Italian, an honor of which she is immensely proud.

Rae's fundraising efforts extended to Marin Bocce as well. Upon her recommendation, the Curry Senior Center has chosen MBF as the venue to hold its fundraising bocce tournament for more than ten years and is one of the facility's longest-running charity events, combining fundraising for a good cause with much fun. Before he passed, Rae's husband (Joe Mignola, Jr.), Deputy Director of SF Public Health, helped found the Curry Center with colleague and friend Dr. Francis Curry in 1972.

CLICK for article on SF Columbus Day Celebration & Parade

(Mignola cont'd)

Next Generation

Rae also brought her children into the mix, as first they were subs on her bocce team, La Famiglia, which eventually turned into regular play and their falling in love with the game too. Now, generations of her family have made memories at MBF–from Lisa's hosting a family gathering to celebrate her mom's 90th birthday at MBF last year, to buying a brick for her mom's team (La Famiglia), to attending the brick celebration this past July.
[See "Commemorative Bricks," p. 11]



La Famiglia Team at the Brick Celebration, July 2026



Commemorative Brick for Rae's 90th Birthday

Memories & Community

Rae would like to see the rose garden and gazebo, where she's enjoyed many wonderful events, preserved in the spirit of this community. Lisa agrees "special celebrations at MBF are more like a picnic in the sunshine with a little social activity and fun for everyone–a great alternative to going to the wineries. Playing bocce is fun for everyone, at any age, you can be good at this game."



Rae reminisced that she, along with many others, came from a community of people who grew up together, attending St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in North Beach and the Italian Athletic Club in San Francisco, and many of them moved to San Rafael.

One of her earliest memories of Marin Bocce is "jumping in our cars and crossing the foggy Golden Gate Bridge in the morning to get a little sunshine, see our buddies, and enjoy the day." What began as a suggestion to fill some time became decades of friendship, fun, and family gatherings on those same courts.

Building a Legacy, Brick by Brick (cont'd)

Part Three: The Nave Family Legacy



Ask almost anyone with deep roots at Marin Bocce and Dolly Nave's name is bound to come up. Dolly is at the core of Marin Bocce Federation's creation. Long before Marin Bocce existed, she raised eight children with her husband, Rich, and improved public recreation spaces around San Rafael–work that earned her the nickname *"Angel of Albert Park"* and among family, the *"recreation activist."* In 1993, she became a founding board member and construction chair of MBF; by the following year, the first six courts were complete. The facility she envisioned was later recognized as the most beautiful public bocce facility in the country. She was inducted into the Marin Women's Hall of Fame for her efforts on behalf of public recreation. Dolly passed away in December 2014, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of accomplishments.

See Dolly's Full BIO HERE



Rich Nave Jr. was chosen as the main contractor for the initial build back in 1994. Rich upholds his mother's legacy in many ways. For over 30 years, he's been a key resource for facility maintenance and operations, serving as the Board's Chair of the Facilities and Grounds Committee. Rich remains on the board today and has played in every season since the inception of league play at the courts.



Rich describes his mother as loving and softer spoken at home. Her harshest words when one of the kids misbehaved were: *"Just wait until I tell your father when he gets home."* He recalls she took a high school aptitude test that pointed her toward engineering. Not surprising for a woman who could fix just about anything–a trait Rich says he inherited from her, not his father.

The courts were built with Dolly leading the charge, selling them for $10,000 each to local businesses and families willing to bet on a game most people in San Rafael have never tried.

Dolly truly was the "*Angel of Albert Park.*"

Building a Legacy, Brick by Brick (cont'd)

More Photos from building the courts...



Concrete Pouring original courts (1994)



Scraping off the old (red) surface (in photo L to R) Chuck Podesta, Diana Pelligrini, Dolly Nave, Rich Nave Jr, CecileTescallo, and Bob Nave



Rich Nave Jr., Matt Valceschini, and Bruce Nave



A busy day at MBF



The original courts with their "Golden Gate Bridge red" surface



(2012) Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for rebuilt courts with: Chuck Podesta, Dolly Nave, and Joe Saccone



Dolly tossing out the ceremonial first ball

VIDEO of ceremony

What draws people to Marin Bocce, and keeps them coming back generations later, comes through clearly in their own words. Rae puts it simply: "I like others to know what I enjoy, like bocce. I could see it was time to bring in some new people to give them the opportunity to learn the game so maybe they'd want to be part of this community too." Chuck feels much the same: "It is a privilege to have our family tied to Marin Bocce. I hope the next generations enjoy the camaraderie and everybody getting together – it's like a big family."

These are just a few of the stories that have shaped the making of Marin Bocce. We want to hear your story too, so we can preserve this community's rich history and family legacies for generations to come. If you want to share your story (or someone else's), please contact: **Karla Rodebush at krodebush@marinbocce.org**

Commemorative Bricks

Celebrating Loved Ones and Special Moments

Selling commemorative bricks has been a tradition for Marin Bocce from the beginning. **Carol Podesta** was one of the first to sell these bricks as a way to help pay for early construction of the facility. And that tradition continues.

The most recent set of commemorative bricks was installed this summer, followed by a celebratory event on July 5th to reveal the bricks laid out in the pathway just in front of the office. Over 40 people attended--including individuals, bocce team players and families--to celebrate the people, special occasions, and accomplishments that each of these bricks represent.





Rae Mignola with her family and teammates from La Famiglia

It was a beautiful summer afternoon and the facility was in full splendor. People mingled and enjoyed wine and cheese as they got (re)acquainted. Eventually everyone gathered together for the unveiling and then, one-by-one, people stepped up to share their story, the memories and meaning behind their brick.

Rae Mignola was there with her family and teammates from team La Famiglia, which her children joined several years later and continue to play on today. Former teammate and current Captain of team Stefanos Pizza, **Bob Valentino**, shared memories of playing with Rae and honored her by placing a gold medal around her neck and declaring: “You are a true champion and you always will be.”



Teresa Rea and Jolene Kramer

Floyd Heckman, Captain of team Romeos, was also there with his family and teammates. He purchased a brick for his son Matthew, who’d passed away in 2025. The Romeos have been around for several years and have a special legacy team, comprised of fathers and sons.
[See “Team Romeos” p. 13]

Jolene Kramer and **Teresa Rea** purchased their brick in celebration of their 2019 National Women’s Doubles Championship, an impressive accomplishment and very memorable experience. They shared that Teresa’s original partner got sick and couldn’t make the tournament, so Jolene stepped in at the last minute – guess it was fate.

Commemorative Bricks (cont'd)

These are just a few stories that were shared. There was much love, happiness and tears that afternoon, but everyone agreed it was a lovely celebration and a special community gathering. As the celebration wound down, more than one person said they'd love to gather like this more often – not to play bocce, but to be together.

We'd like to install new commemorative bricks this spring and invite you to purchase one. Order forms are in the office. You're not only buying a brick, your memory will forever be part of the pathways and foundation that underlie Marin Bocce. Plus, your purchase will help maintain our beautiful facility and enrich our community's legacy for generations to come.



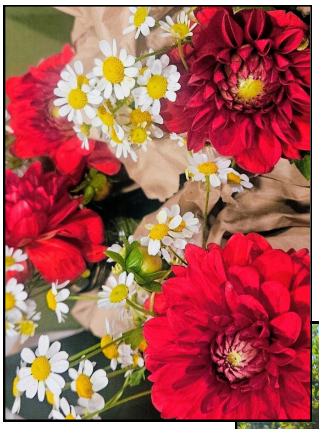






Bob Valentino gives Rae a gold medal







Ken Ellingsen shares memory and expresses gratitude for the special event



photos by *kmrtists*

Team Romeos (not what you think)



Floyd Heckman, Dick Coe & Richard Allen



W (that's really his name), JP and Park



Matthew & Floyd Heckman

It all started back in the early-to-mid '70s, when a bunch of dads who were our Little League coaches decided coaching us wasn't enough—they needed their own team. So they formed a softball team and played together for decades.



W and Dick Coe

About 25 years ago, when the knees, shoulders, and hamstrings started suggesting softball might not be a lifetime sport, they traded the diamond for the bocce courts and formed the Romeos.

Now, you might assume "Romeos" was chosen because they were such a handsome group of guys—and I'm sure they'd be happy to let you believe that. But ROMEO actually stands for "Retired Old Men Enjoying the Outdoors."

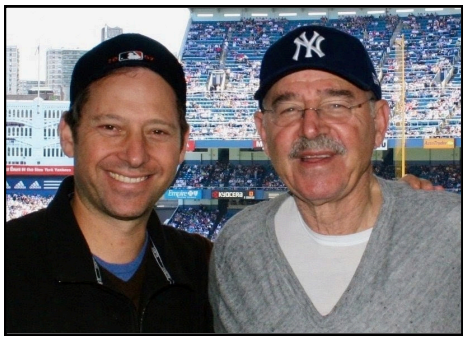


Richard and Park Allen

And here's where the legacy comes in. The guys they coached as kids back in the '70s eventually grew up, got older—and apparently (age-wise) became eligible for the team. So, over the last couple years, those former Little Leaguers have been recruited into the Romeos themselves.

So more than 50 years later, it's come full circle: the coaches and the kids now teammates, playing bocce together.

We may move a little slower than we did in the '70s, but at least nobody has to run to first base playing bocce.

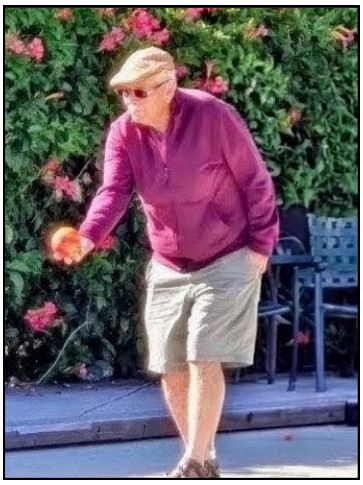


JP and Richard Pearl

David Arrow 1947-2026



David Arrow, a devoted husband, loving father, proud grandfather, and U.S. Army veteran, passed away on September 4, 2026, at the age of 79. Following his military service, he settled in Novato. For over 30 years, he operated his custom upholstery business, David Arrow Interiors, providing dedicated workmanship and skill.



David lived life to the fullest, enjoying bowling or fishing on his boat. He eventually traded bowling for bocce; he found great joy in its easy camaraderie and friendly competition.

Above all else, he treasured his family, creating memories that will be held dear forever. On his 50th birthday, David became a grandfather, a role that brought him tremendous pride.

David is survived by his loving wife, Lisa Arrow; his three children, Anthony, Troy, and David; and his stepchildren, Shawn, Michelle, Erick, Sasha and Igor. He also leaves behind a cherished circle of grandchildren, extended family, and dear friends.

Mike Boland 1955-2026



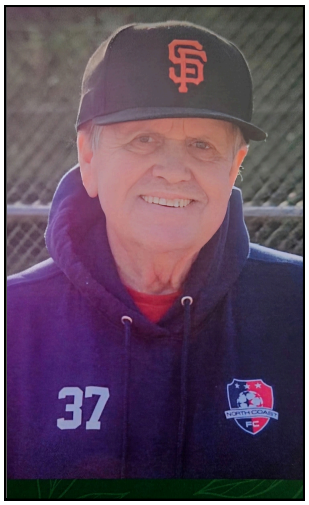
Mike passed away peacefully at Stanford Hospital after a courageous battle with AML at the age of 71. Mike attended Marin Catholic High School and received his J.D. from the University of San Francisco. He practiced law at Brown & Boland and has been described as one of the nicest attorneys, with his rare mix of calm gravitas, astute professionalism, and personal kindness.

Mike exemplified selfless "giving" whether it be through family, civic duties, charities and Twin Cities Little League just to name a few. He also enjoyed spending time at Marin Bocce, where he organized and played on the Deboccery and Ciao Bella teams.

Les Hembree

(obituary unavailable)

Mike Jessen
1951-2026

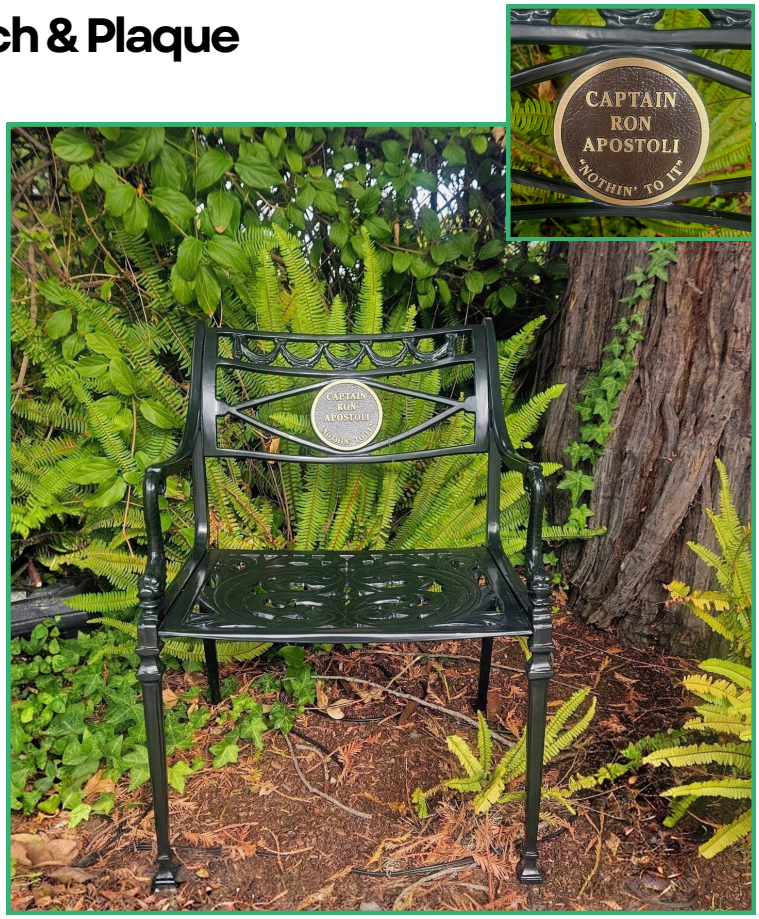


(obituary unavailable)



Update and Thank You

Ron Apostoli Memorial Bench & Plaque



Thank you to everyone who donated to the purchase of Ron Apostoli's memorial chair and plaque, aptly engraved :

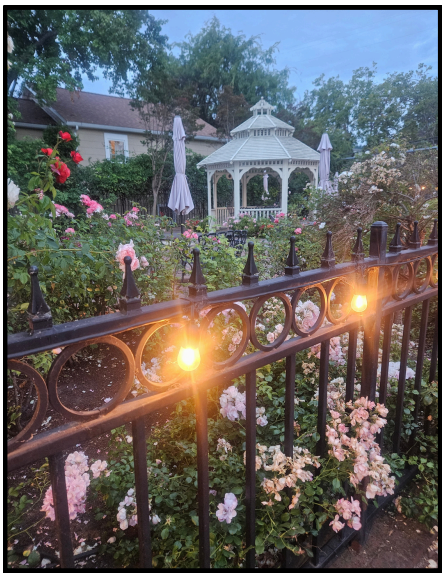
"Captain Ron Apostoli,
'Ain't nothing' to it."

His chair has been placed near the Redwood Grove (next to court F). The remaining donation funds will support the Bay Area German Shepherd Dog Rescue, a cause that was dear to Ron.

Teams Una Bella Mattina, Pompieri, and Holy Cannoli are grateful for your generosity.







photos by *kmrtists*

USBF Men's Doubles July 11



1st Place
Ben Campbell
John Lopez



3rd Place
Damario/Guman



2nd Place
Dean Farnesi
Denis Prosperi



4th Place
Mark Stefanski
Dave Foti

MBF Mixed Doubles

July 26



1st Place
Braden Levine
Jessica Libien



2nd Place
Pete Johnson
Mara Mayock



3rd Place
Rod & Hannah
Fliegel



4th Place
Erik Sagerdahl
Maria Narayan

USBF Four Person "Big Money" August 8

GOLD DIVISION



1st Place
Damon Meyer
Mark Wolfe
Emi Fuji
Al Velasquez



2nd Place
Jeff Tremolada
Steve Choe
Martha Crosley
Alberto Talavera



3rd Place
Ron Reeher
Dan Crowl
Rich Passanisi
Mike Adamson

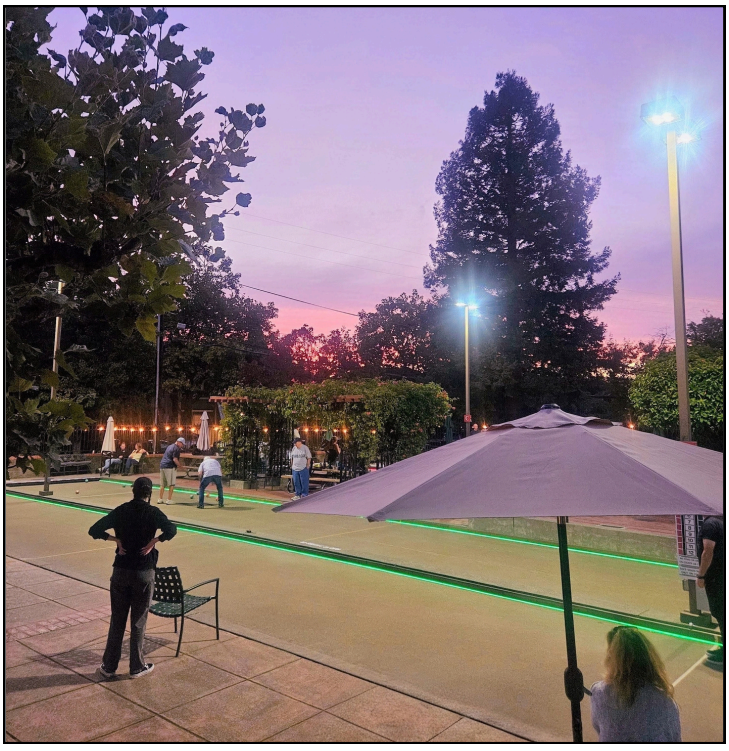


4th Place
Dean Farnesi
Don Farnesi
Denis Prosperi
Troy Horton

SILVER DIVISION



1st Place
Joe Malfitano
Mario Mejia
Ted Nicholson
Jack Gutierrez



Gorgeous sunsets in mid-August at the courts



photos by *kmrtists*

Remarkable Achievement

American Bocce Company (ABC)_
US Open Championship

Detroit, Michigan
Sept 10-12

SILVER 2nd Place Team



Steve Choe (Sacramento)
Jeff Tremolada (Marin)
Dan Crowl (Marin)
Giovanni Altameri (Sacramento)

Clinics & Lessons

Community Building in progress

You've probably seen this flyer posted around the facility, but if not, be sure to...

CHECK IT OUT!

Something **GOOD** for **FREE** is hard to believe and doesn't happen very often – but this opportunity is now & golden!!



INSTRUCTORS

All these instructors are National Champions with Gold, Silver and Bronze medals – better yet, they LOVE teaching and want to see your skills and level of play improve. Don't miss out on this community-build initiative available to MBF league players only and good through the rest of 2026.



Jolene Kramer | Maria Narayan | Rena Harel | Diana Pelligrini | Ed Schmitz | Julie Nunes

If interested, contact Karla (info on flyer above) and she'll be happy to get you paired with the right instructor – based on skill level, group size (individual or groups up to 10 people) and your schedule.

Remaining Tournaments

DATE	TOURNAMENT
Sunday, October 4	Battle of the Sexes
Sunday, October 10	USBF Mixed Doubles

photo credit: *kmrtists*



Elaine & Jeff “between games”



Michel P “in position”



Maria “pregame warm up”



Maya & Pete “strategizing”



Karla “getting the line”



Celine “official scorekeeper”



Pete Johnson “shooting”



Gary Johnson “focused”

Mission Statement

Our mission is to enhance and enrich the lives of people by creating an inclusive community of bocce enthusiasts who come together to enjoy the sport in a supportive environment. We strive to provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about and play bocce while fostering a sense of community through regular gatherings and events.

Our goal is to create an atmosphere in which everyone feels welcome and included, while providing a first-rate venue for players of all skill levels at affordable fees.



photos credit: *kmrtists*