

NPA

(INDOOR / FOUR-WALL)
National Paddleball Association
WWW.PADDLEBALL.ORG

NPA, 7642 Kingston, Portage, Mich. 49002

NEWSLETTER / FALL 2012-2013



Preston Martin ... Challenge Doubles dean

It's a Challenge

By JIM OWENS

Every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, paddleball players gather at the One-On-One Club in Ann Arbor, Mich., to sign up and play challenge doubles -- Tuesday and Thursday from about 4:30 p.m. to 7:00, Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 or so.

Just show up, put your name on the white board next to the glass wall on Court 1, get ready and wait for your turn on the next available court.

You partner with the player directly above or below your name on the board. It is poor form and rarely done to criticize the assignment of your partner.

Saturday morning is the most popular of the three days. It is not unusual to have three games of doubles going on with two or three players waiting on the carpeted steps on back of Court 1.

The winning team of the match stays on the court and plays the next two players on the list. The challengers get to serve first. If a team wins three consecutive matches, it must give up the court.

The mainstay of Ann Arbor-area paddleball draws a number of out-of towners, commonly from Jackson (36 miles one way), Adrian (45 miles), Westland (21 miles), Livonia (26 miles), Fenton (39 miles) and Brighton (26 miles).

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NPA Schedule

Brigham Classic
(Doubles), Nov. 30,
Dec. 1 & 2, 2012,
Dow Family Y, Bay
City, MI.

Midwest Singles,
Jan. 19-20, 2013,
Bronson Athletic
Club, Kalamazoo,
MI.

Midwest Doubles,
Feb. 8-10, 2013,
Michigan Athletic
Club, E. Lansing,
MI.

**All other tourneys
to be announced.**

Paddleball eases pressure on champ Carrillo's back

(Editor's Note: This article was
written by Don Wade of the Memphis
Commercial Appeal)

Cesar Carrillo, a former racquetball player for the University of Memphis, took up paddleball to ease the strain he was putting on his back.

"I don't see it as a workout," Carrillo said. "It's fun."

It wasn't that Carrillo didn't have his good times in racquetball, because he did.

By the time he put down his racket and picked up the sport of paddleball, he had led the University of Memphis racquetball team in Tennessee to two national collegiate



Cesar Carrillo

championships and cracked the top 30 on the pro tour.

"His quickness was the best I ever had," says Larry Liles, who coached the

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CHALLENGE

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The drop-in guest fee is \$10. A few of the regular out-of-towners have joined One-On-One.

Scott Lawrence, a Fenton resident and a regular on the challenge courts, must rack up the most miles in pursuit of paddleball on a weekly basis -- three or four trips to Ann Arbor per week -- in the neighborhood of 300 miles.

The format of challenge court doubles presents an unpredictable mix of teams. Span of ability ranges from C to Open.

Jim Holland, a regular, noted: "I come from Livonia to play at the One-On-One because of the fine competition. On any given day, you can beat players into submission or get your ass handed to you. There are many different levels of skill up there and you just can't predict what's going to happen."

Several NPA tournament teams have been formed on the steps at One-On-One.

Bob Sterken, a resident of Holland, Mich., occasionally travels to the Ann Arbor area to visit his brother, Jim, or the dental school at the University of Michigan.

Bob noted that if we counted the number of national champions that have played challenge doubles at One-On-One: "It might be quite a few people."

That certainly is the case.

There often is a lot of good-natured sparring between matches -- at least it usually is good-natured. Phil Conlin suggests that you "leave your feelings at home."

Preston Martin, the man with the infectious laugh, is considered to be the "dean" of challenge doubles. He traces the challenge court idea back to Sunday gatherings at the Old IM Building at the University of Michigan, the birthplace of paddleball.



The One-On-One Club in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Preston, a former open-level player, recalls that when he played on Sunday mornings in the '70s that the challenge idea already was a tradition.

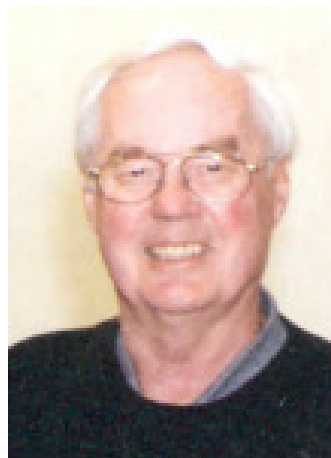
"I recall those gatherings at the IM," he said. "In the heyday of paddleball, the '70s and early '80s, all 14 courts often would be filled with players and several players would be waiting for open courts."

The One-On-One Club opened in November of 1991. Cindy and Brad Cook believe challenge doubles started "around '93 and it hit 'critical mass' a couple years after that due to the influx of racquetball switchovers from the club plus some of the IM crowd joining."

The club is at 2875 Boardwalk Dr., east of S. State St. and north of E. Eisenhower Pkwy.

Challenge doubles at the club continues to be a dependable place to find a good mix of paddleball players. If you are traveling through or near Ann Arbor or choose to travel from where you are, feel free to join the mix.

It's a challenge. It's paddleball.



Jim Owens (left) has been named president of the NPA, replacing Lou Hekhuis (right), who became president emeritus. Owens is a longtime player and member of the NPA Board of Managers. Hekhuis had headed the organization since the late 1970s.



CARRILLO

Continued from Page 1

Memphis racquetball team from 1975-2004.

Unfortunately, the U. of M. team disbanded because of a lack of financial support. Many former players still live in the Memphis area, and several -- Carrillo most prominent among them -- have taken up paddleball.

Although Carrillo, 33, started playing paddleball in 2008, he won the game's national singles title in the open division in 2009. After not playing in 2010 -- his wife had just given birth to their son -- he returned to win the national singles titles in 2011 and 2012 in dominating style.

"All the people he beat were trying to figure out who scored the most cumulative points," said David Fleetwood, 55, himself a former U. of M. racquetball player who was ranked as high as fifth on racquetball's pro tour in the late '70s and early '80s. "He hasn't lost a game at the nationals yet."

Carrillo started playing racquetball in his native Mexico at age 14. He says he switched from racquetball to paddleball for "obvious reasons." Racquetball, though well-established as a pro sport, never has rewarded its players much financially. And all the torso torque required in racquetball to generate power has taken its toll on his back.

In paddleball, he has found a sport that provides even more advantage for a player with great quickness. But Carrillo and others who have played racquetball also say paddleball is the better sport for fitness.

"I don't see it as a workout," said Carrillo, a sales manager for Cyprus Supply, who wins no money for his national paddleball titles -- just a big wooden trophy he didn't even bother to bring back on the plane from San Diego this year.

"It's fun," he said. "You play a few games, and you're working out and you don't even know it."

Easy for him to say. Carrillo is so skilled and so fast that even on a day when he misses a few shots, he plays Fleetwood and Roberto Vasquez, a former member of Cuba's national kayaking team, two on one and beats them, 21-16.

Time and again, Carrillo is just a little too good, a little too fast.

"His game is almost perfect," said Vasquez.

Said Fleetwood: "He just toys with all of us."

Carrillo calls racquetball a 100-meter sprint and paddleball a cross-country run.

"It's about three times the workout," says Andy Yambrek, 38, another former Memphis racquetball player, who described playing Carrillo as "walking into a firestorm."

For Carrillo, though, it's more like a firestorm of creativity.

"You can play a touch game," said Carrillo. "I feel like I have a canvas and can paint whatever I want to paint. In racquetball (at the highest levels), it's all about the power."

Carrillo rejects this term, but around Germantown Athletic Club he is known as something of a paddleball "evangelist," because he is always trying to convert more racquetball players or at least get them to play paddleball, too.

In his favor, he is well-liked and known for a humility not normally associated with great players in any sport. But working against him is that many of the racquetball players found it impossible ever to win a game against him in that sport.

And it takes but a few minutes watching Carrillo play paddleball to realize that beating him in this game is even more daunting.

But he often is in his paddleball pulpit, saying that the game -- and its best player -- welcomes everyone.

"Anyone can play it," he says.

Just not like him.

Craig Melvin Fund

to promote paddleball

By JIM OWENS

On January 29, 2012, an extremely upbeat paddleball player and all-around great individual -- Craig Melvin -- lost a long and difficult fight with cancer.

Before his death, Craig had graciously designated the NPA as a recipient of memorial contributions.

In Craig's honor, the NPA has established the Craig Melvin Promotional Fund with the \$2100 received.

This past season, \$600 was divided among three worthy players and applied to their travel expenses to the National Doubles Tournament.

It is the desire of the NPA Board of Managers to enlarge this fund, make it an ongoing resource, and apply it to worthy promotional endeavors.

We have set up a link, The Craig Melvin Promotional Fund, for direct contributions at www.paddleball.org.

Tournament entry forms the next season will include a box to check for those choosing to add a \$5 contribution to their entry fee.

If you have any questions, please contact Lorri Brigham or me at NPA@paddleball.org

The NPA Board of Managers certainly values Craig's generosity. Please help us promote paddleball and honor Craig's legacy by donating to the Craig Melvin Promotional Fund.

High praise for the late Steve Trent

The late paddleballer, Steve Trent, was described by Andy Mitchell thusly:

“He had the best set of hands I think I have ever seen.”

That’s high praise from the player who generally is considered the best doubles competitor in the history of the sport.

Trent died June 10, 2012, from cancer.

Mitchell of Kalamazoo, Mich., played with -- and against -- Trent, 54, of San Diego, over the years.

They teamed to win the 2005 and 2011 National Masters Doubles Championships.

“He was a great guy and an intense, quiet competitor,” said Mitchell. “That’s why we hit it off ... He had the best set of hands I think I have ever seen.

“(In a match against him), I remember him getting a ball about four or five feet from the front wall, and I tried to blast it back through him and he killed it from about waist high. I didn’t think he could even get his paddle on it and he rolled it out!!”

Mitchell recalls Trent being very active when they played in the 2005 national tournament.

“The first couple of matches we struggled but won and Steve was all over the court, especially up front on my side,” he said. “We talked a little and I assured him I could handle my side and he could just cover his side.

“Once we did that, we just rolled. We were unstoppable. I would have liked a piece of Lerner and Gelhaus!! (Steve) was such an easy guy to play with. Intense, smart and no quit in him.”

Mitchell said he and Trent were playing an older team and winning comfortably “when Steve and I had an ‘aha’



Trent

moment.

“I think we both relaxed a little and the other team just got ridiculously hot ... and before we knew it, we were losing, 12-13,” Mitchell said. “Steve became very intense and I picked it up and we went on and won, 21-16.

“The next game started and before the other team knew what hit them, it was 15-0 and it looked like we were going to shut them out. I skipped the next ball in and left up another easy one and they scored a point.

“Steve looked at me with that look of ‘Let’s go’ and as we were standing there in the

box I said to him I don’t ever want to embarrass another team by shutting them out. He nodded O.K. and I think we won, 21-1 or 2.”

Mitchell said he was watching Trent in one of his other matches and “was killing (the opponent) something like 15 or 16 to 0. He skipped in the next one for side out and then took an overhead that almost hit his own toe.

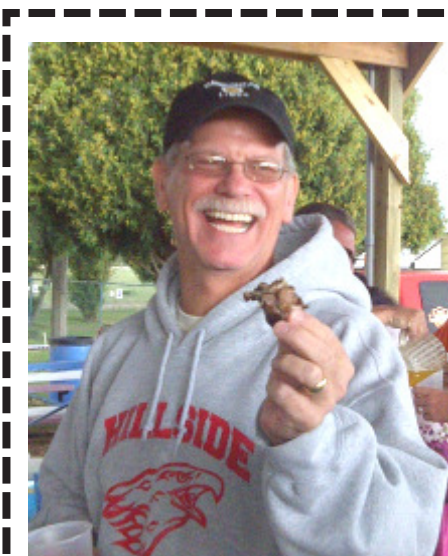
“I said ‘Nice shot’ and he winked at me with that Cheshire cat grin and I know he had in his own way just acknowledged that there was no point in beating someone, 21-0.

“For me, that was a very cool thing and showed me what a special person Steve Trent was. A great athlete and a great person.”

Steve Trent also won the Men’s A national doubles championship with Chad Krager of Bay City, Mich., in 2009.

In addition, Trent won five national racquetball doubles titles.

Sorrento Valley Racquetball and Fitness Center in San Diego held a fund-raiser for Trent about 10 weeks before his death.



It was an honor

Scott Schrum, the honoree at the 2012 Pig Roast, holds the animal’s eye prior to consuming it in the time-honored tradition.

Schrum, who is one of the 6 a.m. players in the Kalamazoo, MI area, began playing the game in 1971 when coaches told him it would be good for conditioning.

He has played at several sites and also plays in the Otto League.

-- Photo by ROBERT STONE

Players 'patch' friendship despite severe eye injury

By LOU GIAMPETRONI

I was a little reluctant to write this article because there are some out there who might find it distasteful.

In 2000, Basil Baker of Ann Arbor, Mich., was struck in the right eye in a pickup game by a hard-hit ball by Phil Conlin, also of Ann Arbor. They were -- and continue to be -- good friends. They play each other singles at least once a week.

"To even things up" when they play, Conlin said, he wears an eye patch over his right eye.

Both players realize that accidents happen and Basil continues their friendship.

Baker, an outstanding Seniors paddleballer at the time, did not enter any tournaments for 10 years.

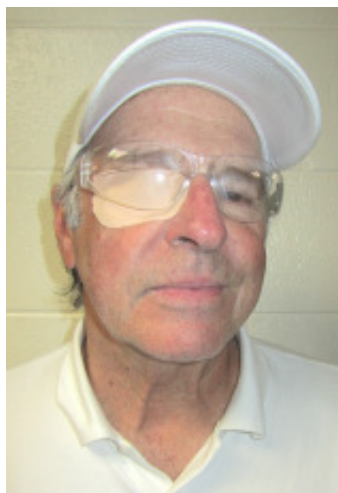
But he entered the 2009 National Singles Tournament and reached the platinum masters (at least 65) final against Jer Fennell of Jackson, Mich.

Baker lost in two games. But the headline above an article in the NPA newsletter read: "It's not just all about wins."

It was a personal victory for Baker, who basically played with vision in one eye.

Over a period of time, Baker -- an attorney -- had five surgeries in an attempt to regain some of the vision. None was successful.

He was not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident and said in 2009 that "Now



Phil Conlin



Basil Baker

I'm the poster boy for eye gear."

Baker, who began playing paddleball in 1971, was asked if he had any concerns about playing.

"Not with the eye protection," he said. "None whatsoever."

Baker had no qualms about the article in the NPA newsletter.

As he laughed, he said, "You should run it. Absolutely. I think it's a hoot. It's hilarious.

"The only thing is, it doesn't even up the matches. I'm looking for a darker patch for Phil, one more opaque."

Baker was the recipient of the NPA's Sportsmanship Trophy in 1993.

He won the national senior singles crown in 1981, the national seniors doubles title in 1987 and the national masters singles championship in 1991.

PB at Belle Isle

The outdoor PB tourney held at Belle Isle, MI, in late June was great fun for all the players involved.

The format was a round-robin doubles event, where you played with a new partner in each game.

The winner of the event was Sonny Salazar of Adrian, MI. Second was Jim Price of Delta College.



-- Randy Wackerle

PBballers take stage at Las Vegas meet

By JIM OWENS

No rain-out this year.

It was a spectacular open paddleball final at the 3 Wall Ball World Championships in Las Vegas.

Emmett Coe and Brian Pineda, both from California, defeated Todd Entrikin and Dale Valentine, also both from California, in an exciting three-game tiebreaker.

Coe and Pineda won the 2012 NPA open doubles championship.

Ed Maher and Kevin McLaughlin, both from Kalamazoo, MI, placed third, receiving a forfeit from Marty Hogan of St. Louis, MO, and

New York City's Robert Sostre, "The Iceman."

Eugene Rush of the Ann Arbor, MI area and Mike Myers, a promising young player from Riverside, CA defeated Rigo Marin and Nate Taylor from San Diego to capture the A title.

Rigo and Nate took the B title, defeating the father-son team of Norm and Alex Bruemmer.

Norm lives in Kalamazoo and Alex in Houston, Texas.

Sonny Salazar and Andy Pappas, both from Michigan, were first in C, a drop-down from B.

2012 Earl Risky Trophy: Todd Entrikin

By JIM OWENS

Todd Entrikin of Perris, CA, received the 2012 NPA Earl Risky Memorial Trophy on April 14 for his numerous contributions to the sport.

It was an obvious selection for the Board of Managers because Todd has done so much for our sport this season.

Entrikin grew up playing racquetball. His father had him on the court at age two, and he competed in his first pro-level racquetball tournament at 16.

Two highly-ranking racquetball players -- Kelly Gelhaus and Rich Wagner -- introduced Todd to paddleball at the Tournament House in Riverside, CA, in 2002. Todd was 22.

Gelhaus and Wagner had been ranked as high as #8 and #2 in professional racquetball, respectively. Gelhaus was a dominating open-level paddleball tournament player from 2004 through 2007, capturing four national doubles championships and three national singles titles.

Entrikin adapted to paddleball rather quickly. The slower ball fit his style to a T. He is clearly one of the best retrievers in the game today. At times, he seems to fly around the court.

Todd came to his first NPA tournament in 2005, the National Doubles in Bloomingdale, ILL.

He is now one of our premier tournament players, having won four open and two Men's A national championships with four different partners.

Last season, Todd finished second in both national doubles and national singles.

Entrikin was appointed to the Board of Managers in 2009 and since has contributed

Earl Risky started indoor four-wall paddleball in 1930 at the University of Michigan using a wooden paddle and a tennis ball stripped of its cover.

Each year, the National Paddleball Association recognizes an individual for exceptional contributions to the sport and awards that individual the Earl Risky Memorial Trophy.



Entrikin ... Risky Winner
a great deal. His most notable recent achievement was providing the leadership needed to secure paddleball's participation in the Las Vegas 2011 World 3 Wall Ball Championships with handball and racquetball.

In addition to providing paddleball players another fun venue in which to compete, it exposed our sport to hundreds

One might say Todd is the Johnny Applesseed of PB

of potential players. The NPA was invited to return for this year's Las Vegas 3 Wall Ball Tournament scheduled for Sept. 19-23. Again, Todd served as our point man.

When asked to comment on our award selection, Hank Marcus -- executive director of the World Outdoor Racquetball (WOR) and Ektelon representative -- noted:

"From a personal and professional standpoint, I cannot think of a more deserv-

ing person than Todd to receive the highest honor in Paddleball.

"Todd's love of the sport drives him and is infectious for anyone who comes in contact with him."

Todd capably represented the NPA in a Philadelphia-based and web broadcast radio program, WNJC's Racquetball Roundtable, hosted by Ray Davis, promoting the World 3 Wall Ball Tournament before the tournament and reporting back afterwards.

Todd is a reliable and active board member.

He serves with Chad Krager and I on a committee charged with reviewing existing rules and making revision recommendations.

Chad simply said: "Todd is great."

Todd has provided several constructive insights.

Ektelon, in addition to providing the NPA with a high-quality ball, has signed Todd to a three-year contract sponsoring him specifically for paddleball.

This makes Todd our first sponsored player.

Todd organized and directed an Ektelon-sponsored three-division one-day tournament in Riverside and aided in running two other one-day tournaments in southern California this past year.

Todd Entrikin continues to spread the word about our great sport.

Thank you, Todd, for all you have done and continue to do.

The 'Commissioner' -- Craig Melvin -- got the 2012 Sportsmanship Trophy

By MATT KOLLIG

First of all, I'd like to thank Lou for asking me to write about a good friend who passed away last January. I truly feel it's an honor to write about a friend of all of ours!

Craig Melvin, "the Commissioner," was a good friend, true competitor, incredible Pictionary player, "stats man," husband and father -- just to name a few.

He also was the 2012 recipient of the National Paddleball Association's Sportsmanship Trophy.

My exploits with the Commissioner started in the early '80s. By the way, if you don't know by now, everyone in Kalamazoo has a nickname. Craig's was well chosen by his sports acumen; you certainly didn't want to get in an argument or discussion with the Commissioner when it came down to rulings. You certainly would lose!!

Anyway, back to my story. Craig was living with and was one of the infamous "five easy pieces." I was lucky enough (maybe it should be stupid enough) to move into this living arrangement with these guys.

We had Meat (Andy Mitchell), JR (Andy Kasalo), Rooster (Bobby Glass), Snake (Keith Drake) and the Commissioner. I believe I brought the number to six and needless to say, there was never a dull moment. One commonality we had amongst all these room-mates is we played paddleball.

Now please understand this wasn't your laid-back, easy-going games. This was "in your face" paddleball and only the strong survived. Playing with legends such as Meat and JR definitely raised everyone's ability.

There are so many

stories and I could write a whole book on them. A couple that stick out in my mind were the time we went to Flint for a paddleball tournament and crammed eight guys into a tiny motel room. The owner made it very clear upon check-in that no more than the two people that checked in would be allowed to stay!

The next morning, since it was daylight we had to sneak out the back window of the room and guess who caught us? It was the Commissioner that worked his magic and was able to calm a very angry motel owner down!

Another favorite story is Christmas caroling. Boy were we bad! During one of our carols, this author mistakenly confused the date Jesus was born and from that day forward every holiday season, the Commissioner would remind me that I celebrate Christmas on New Year's Day!!

As time moved on, Craig was the smart one and moved out, got married and had a family. He was still a member of the "Kalamazoo Touring Team" and participated in tournaments as his schedule and family time allowed.

Craig was well-known in the area for his sports officiating. He worked everything from football to volleyball. Some of his fondest memories were working with his father, Kay, on an occasional football game. Occasionally during these games, Craig's son -- Danny -- would be the ball boy and what a cool thing to be working on the field with your son and father.

Craig took time out of his busy schedule to help out in the community. He was a "champion" blood donor for the Red Cross. One pint short



Craig Melvin

of 15 gallons!! Think about that. That's quite a bit of blood! He was actively involved in Meals on Wheels in Kalamazoo. Worked with Willing Workers at Lake Louise and every Christmas you could find him helping out at the Christmas Dinner at the Blue Dolphin.

His job as a travel director took him all over the world and on occasion he would take his family with him. I always looked forward to the Melvins' Christmas card. A picture would always be taken somewhere during their many travels!

Craig, 57, had a terrific family. His wife, Kim, was a very supportive wife. She accepted Craig's phenomenal love of sports and his crazy paddleball friends.

Craig, who passed away early in 2012, was incredibly proud of his two children, Danny and Katie. He would always talk about them and what they were up to. We all love Kim. You could never ask for someone more supportive and loyal.

Craig had many friends and I feel lucky to be considered one of them. We can all take a lesson from Craig in how he lived his life.

He lived it to the fullest and I can say I feel I'm a better person for knowing Craig Melvin!

PADDLEBALL PROFILE



Ruble

Ted Ruble is one of those many, many persons who have enjoyed their paddleball experience.

Ruble, 60, of Battle Creek, Mich., said he began playing PB "40 years ago (for) fun."

Ruble, who is in sales, said what he enjoys most about the sport is "the competition and the gang."

He was asked about any titles or high finishes in his years of competition.

"3-4 times -- different divisions -- can't remember."

Any suggestions on how tournaments can be improved?

"No, I think for the most part they're great," he said.

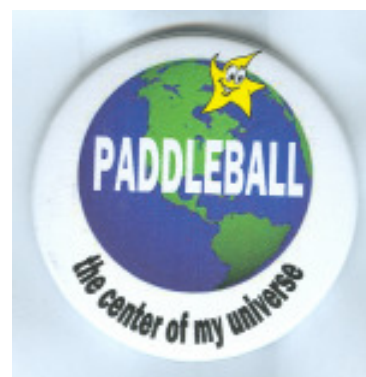
(Editor's Note: I met Steve Keeley for the first time in 1971 when he won his first national singles championship at the Flint, Mich., YMCA. Over the years, I have received countless E-mails and letters from him from all parts of the globe. He is an adventurer who can't seem to stand still. This is one of his latest communications. - - Lou Giampetroni)

Gulliver in Baja

Bo 9 July 2012

It was a cold night in Baja a month ago when I struggled off the trail into a ghost town with an adobe house, and scraped a hole in the leaves for a nest, and thinking twice pushed them into a corner to start a fire. I fell asleep, but the fire did not,

with a view of the stars through the rafters. In minutes the flames climbed the corner reflecting heat and singeing my blanket. They licked the dry rafters that sparked, and ignited the corner that threatened to leap to the next house. There was no water in my canteen, however recall from Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels, 'Thinking quickly, Gulliver chooses to urinate on the fire, putting it out completely and keeping it from spreading to the rest of the palace. I swiftly leaped and dashed out the open door to climb broken bricks on the outside. Standing at the top, I extinguished the blazing rafters with a stream of urine to save the ghost town from certain death.



Randy Wackerle, of Bay City, Mich., got me interested in making buttons.

He gave me a device years ago and I don't know how many buttons I've made over the years -- for family reunions, for gags, for paddleball tournaments, etc.

Well, Randy gave me one about a year ago that says it all for me (and I suspect a lot of other paddleballers).

This is it. And I'm sure my wife, Sue, will attest to the fact that PB is quite important to me.

-- LOU GIAMPETRONI

Stiff and sore and glad all over.

PADDLEBALL ... It's a little early but ...

Happy Holidays!