



HOLMBY HAPPENINGS

The

newsletter of the Holmby Park LBC founded in 1927

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Holmby bowlers on June 3 during our annual visitation at Oxnard LBC.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

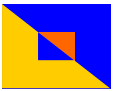
Most of our members seem to be satisfied with the current running of our club and with the organization of the various events - the so called 'Holmby happenings'. These events, like tournaments, visitations or birthday parties, have existed since our club started to function in the 1920's. We never had any employees, so all work has always been contributed by our volunteers. Whether we like it or not, the fact remains that not all members volunteer equally to perform the many needed tasks. Over the years, the percentage of volunteers compared with total membership has fluctuated, but it has always been only a fraction of our total membership. While during the last few years the number of tasks has remained the same, total membership has unfortunately declined.

Under these circumstances, with a declining pool of volunteers, it is unrealistic to expect the same high level of efficiency that has been a hallmark of our club for many years. With smaller membership, we face two alternatives: either the still contributing, fewer number of volunteers have to take on extra tasks, or the level of efficiency will suffer. Our path forward would feel more secure if more active members would volunteer. Please help our club to remain efficient.

One of the most critical subjects is our recruiting. This is discussed on page 3. We urgently need to build a strategy for effective recruiting which should include several different methods reaching out to prospective bowlers. This will take time, smarts, commitments and a small group of dedicated volunteers. We must harness our combined brainpower to improve recruiting and we need a half dozen members to implement our campaign. Last week, a clarion call for action and help was emailed to every member. Please contact Pouran or Tom if you are willing to help in the coming weeks.

Our greens have been improving and new sod will soon be planted in the bare patches on both greens. Our persistence with the lights for twilight bowling during the summer has met many practical problems, but a crucial meeting has now been scheduled with the DRP officers and Supervisors. Our preparations for the 90th Anniversary celebrations are unfolding, the participation of the UCLA Color Guards has been secured and invitations to dignitaries have been sent out.

The changing composition of our membership forced us to reconsider long-established policies. An opinion survey was conducted in May to find out what exactly our current membership wants. A report on page 2 provides you with the results. This month, those who usually wish to see lots of photos will be disappointed. We had too many serious issues to report, I am sorry guys, but this time *"Not enough pictures!"*



HPLBC OPINION SURVEY 2017

We already reported in this publication that it is becoming increasingly difficult to organize our traditional club tournaments. The composition of our membership has been changing and we no longer have enough regular members who would commit to participating in four or five consecutive bowling days. This change has forced us to experiment with different types of alternative competitions.

To find the most acceptable types of tournaments to attract the largest number of active members, we needed the opinions of all members in good standing, including all our dual members. It seemed fruitless to insist on promoting events that are not supported by a sufficiently large number of our members. For this reason we printed a simple opinion survey which was either handed out to those who came to the club, or emailed to those who did not bowl during the two weeks period of the survey. We aimed to collect the maximum number of responses while realizing that expecting 100% participation is unrealistic in any opinion survey.

With perseverance we collected answers to our five simple questions from a high percentage of our members in good standing. Our 2017 Roster shows **79** members, including duals. However, six are non-bowling members and two (both duals) declined to vote. This meant that our starting number was only 71. In spite of repeated emails and calls 7 were either traveling (2 of them duals), or otherwise remained unreachable. 64 members, however, completed the survey, representing over **90%** of our adjusted Roster number. The answers were tabulated and they provided us with some surprising results.

- 1) **Only** 15 members (or **23 %**) are willing to participate in **traditional** tournaments that would involve bowling on four consecutive bowling days.
- 2) By contrast, 42 members (or **66%**) are willing to participate in the '**flexible** schedule' tournaments. This number is even more impressive if we consider that among the 22 responding "No", 6 are duals, 8 are still working. The remaining 8 members do not wish to participate in any tournament. That can be interpreted as **2/3** of members would **participate**.
- 3) 46 members (or **72%**) would prefer to participate in tournaments with Cella type of scoring (**nearest four bowls to the jack**) and 18 (or 28%) answered 'No'. However, these are the same members who also said 'No' to question 2 (flexible schedule) - mostly duals and others still in the work force.

4) One of the truly astonishing (and surprising) findings of this survey was the answer to our question 4. The great majority of our members (44 members, or a stunning **69%**) would be satisfied with 'social' open bowling, **with no competition** at all at Holmby.

5) **Visitations remain popular.** 48 members (or **75%**) responded in the positive and are willing to attend visitations. The remaining 16 are either duals, or tournament players busy with the SWD tournaments during the same weekends, or have health limitations.

What is our **conclusion**? No doubt, this is a consequential survey because we may have to abandon some of our long cherished club policies in order to satisfy the preferences of the majority of our current members as expressed during this survey. The tabulated results can be summed up as follows:

Firstly, we should not try to force the traditional tournaments on our current membership. Secondly, it would not matter for most members if we do not organize any competitions at all. Thirdly, our more competitive minded members are still willing to participate in the more flexible type of tournaments including the Cella type (we call it: Australian) scoring. Finally, the overwhelming majority supports visitations.

Note: On each survey sheet we indicated members' names. This was needed to uphold the integrity of the survey as it was designed, distributed, collected and tabulated by the same person. All this information was then checked for accuracy by our Secretary, John Friedland. We also kept all completed survey sheets. Should any member wished to re-check his/her own response, they are available in the office.

BIOGRAPHY: MICHAEL HALBERSTADT.

One of our successful recruiting methods is to offer free lessons of lawn bowling to members of the UCLA Extension Osher Program. "**Lawn Bowling at Holmby Park**" is regularly listed among the free events offered in the UCLA-OLLI Catalog. Michael took four lessons and in October 2016 was admitted to HPLBC. Here is how he remembers his experience:

"I grew up in South Africa and came to the USA in 1965. Both my parents were avid lawn bowlers. I came to Los Angeles in 1987. I joined Holmby in October 2016 through the UCLA – Osher program.

I really enjoy the challenge of the game, being outdoors and its sociability. I plan to play in many tournaments and encourage other motivated Holmby members to do the same."



CAN VISITATIONS BE SAVED?

It seems that it is increasingly difficult to organize successful visitations. Although visitations and the SWD tournaments seem to attract different groups of bowlers, both events are scheduled during the weekends. Many bowlers, who are competitive and still willing to drive in our ever worsening freeway traffic, have to support one or the other event. Very few manage both by alternating their participation in these two types of events. Neither visitations nor the SWD tournaments would be totally successful if they were scheduled on weekdays.

In my opinion, it is in the interest of our bowling community that both tournaments and visitations should continue to be successful. Although different skill levels are required and very different numbers of ends used in these types of events, competitive bowlers participate selectively depending on their level of skills and stamina. The younger, fitter bowlers typically play 40 or more ends in the one day SWD tournaments which is prohibitively many for the rest of the bowling community in our area. Visitations provide an opportunity to the still competitive 'social bowlers' with typically no more than 24 ends during these events. Although official data is not available, it is a fair guess that 'social bowlers' in SWD area outnumber the tournament bowlers many times over.

Most SWD tournaments are superbly organized and played on most weekends. Very often the pleasure of competing is enhanced by the attraction of cash prizes. By contrast, visitations depend on the skills and persistence of a few organizers in each club as well as on the willingness of the 'social bowlers' to drive and participate.

There is no central, umbrella organization for visitations and there are no cash prizes. Each event is independently organized by the clubs involved. Since the seminal article published in the 'Bowls' magazine in 1993, entitled *"Is Sunshine Everything? Is Winning Anything?"* our community has tacitly accepted that there are basically two groups: 'social' and 'tournament' bowlers. I posit that there is also a third group, those who may not participate in the SWD 'money' tournaments, but they still enjoy competitions on a lower skill level and playing less than 40 ends per day. We could call them 'club tournament' players until somebody comes up with a better definition.

The future of visitations depends almost exclusively on the participation of these 'club tournament' bowlers. Our recent survey (see page 2) concluded that about 2/3 of our current members would be satisfied with open bowling only - without any competition at all. Hello 'Sunshine'! Unfortunately, our visitations cannot survive without the backing of this large group of 'only social, no-competition' type of bowlers. Your support is greatly appreciated.

CAN RECRUITING BE IMPROVED?

It has often been said that the two most important ingredients of a successful lawn bowling club are: playable greens and active membership. Obviously, the greens are important as only well maintained greens could make this challenging sport truly enjoyable. But membership is equally critical. When each year the number of members we lose is greater than their replacement, a continuous decline becomes problematic. No matter how well groomed are our greens, if there were only a small number of participants, some events have to be cancelled. In a worse case scenario, a very small membership eventually would no longer justify the expenses and hard work needed to maintain our greens.

This is a sensitive subject as we wish to project and support a totally **optimistic attitude**. But we cannot disregard the facts. Therefore in May, I sent an email appeal to all our Board members asking for more involvement and help with our recruiting program. Our Vice President then suggested that this appeal should also be emailed to all our members. Linda kindly helped with the email distribution and now we are anxiously waiting for the response from those members who are willing help.

VISITATION AT OXNARD ON JUNE 3, 2017.

For several decades, bowlers at Oxnard have been one of our most cooperative partners in the annual, reciprocal visitations. This year again, they sent their bowlers to Holmby in March and we drove to Oxnard on Saturday, June 3. A photo showing most participants is on page 1.

For the reasons discussed above on this page, this time we only had 12 bowlers from Holmby. It was a perfect day for bowling and by 9:15 all bowlers arrived and teams were formed. Our hosts could not have been more welcoming. The club vs. club matches were smoothly organized. During the morning, Holmby won three and lost only one triple match. Cecil's team (Ramesh, Dorothy) and Rudy's team (Valerie, Tom) won by impressive margins, while Linda's team (Freddie, Shirley) prevailed at the last end. During the afternoon, a smaller number of bowlers continued to play by mixing bowlers from both clubs. As always, the ladies of Oxnard treated us to a generous, delicious lunch. Everybody seemed to have a good time!

In the coming weeks, we have a busy visitation schedule as we go to **Hermosa Beach** on Saturday, **June 24** and are scheduled to visit **Santa Monica** on Sunday, **July 9**. Please consider participation in these events before making other arrangements for the same days. I have participated in visitations for two decades and never had an unpleasant experience. Give it a try - we need you!



TWILIGHT BOWLING LIGHTS PROJECT.

Even under average summer conditions, our older members find it dangerous to play three hours in 90 plus degree heat in the middle of the day. Over the last few years, our 'core' group got older and the summers got hotter. Last year, the introduction of our Wednesday late afternoon bowling was the first step in the right direction. As we are now facing another very hot summer, we started to consider alternative timings. Late afternoon bowling is gaining popularity and we are now working on the installation of lights for the twilight period.

This is not as simple as it sounds. Obviously, the LA City DRP (owners of our facilities) has to be seriously involved in this project. They would not even consider it unless the Holmby Park Advisory Board (HPAB) first approved it. Currently, the HPAB is made up of many local, influential homeowners who are not sympathetic to any change that would inconvenience homeowners, or would alter the esthetics of our beautiful park. The HPAB meets only once in every two months and if we missed our presentation on their May 11 meeting, it would have meant no lights until the summer of 2018.

With these considerations in mind, I am happy to report that our 45 minutes presentation on the evening of May 11 was successful and the HPAB approved our plan as presented. Now we need the DRP's help (physically and financially) to proceed to the next stage. We shall continue to report progress to our membership via our bulletin board and this newsletter. In the meantime, your practical suggestions would be gladly considered and perhaps even implemented. Thank you.

BOWLERS' POSITIONS IN TRIPLES.

In every SWD club, triples are played more often than any other combinations. This is also the case at HPLBC. Our novice bowlers are usually assigned to the 'Lead' position, while the more experienced bowlers play 'Vice' or 'Skip'. This arrangement may lead to the erroneous conclusion that the Lead's position is unimportant. Our novice bowlers should be aware that playing lead is not some kind of inferior assignment. On the contrary, in serious competitions, the team's strategy is often based on the 'head' constructed by the Lead - offensive or defensive. While the final conclusion of the score depends mostly on the Skip's skills, the accuracy of the Lead's bowling is an important contributor. The Lead should proudly follow the Skip's instructions for the benefit of the whole team.

OUR WELCOME MAT.

In April, Ramesh introduced two of his friends to bowling: **June Lissandrello** and **Janet Blakey**. By May, they both passed the test and were admitted to active membership. Welcome both to the Holmby family!



In May we also welcomed back **Paul Reznik** who has been on 'sabbatical' but apparently has lost none of his skills on the greens.



STATS OF THE MONTH.

According to the SWD 2017 Membership Report, our 29 clubs had 1,897 members in 2016, but only **1,582** members in 2017. This is a decline of 315 (or 17%). Four clubs still dominate: Laguna Beach = 184, Newport = 184, Laguna Woods = 102, Long Beach = 85. These four clubs represent 35% of total membership, while the remaining 25 other clubs represent 65% of the total membership.

UPCOMING EVENTS.

- June 3: Visitation to Oxnard LBC
- June 7: Meeting with the DRP Supervisors
- June 15: Start of the Cella 66 Pairs tournament
- June 17: Board of Directors meeting
- June 20: Birthday Party at Holmby Park
- June 24: Visitation to Hermosa Beach LBC
- July 9: Visitation to Santa Monica LBC

In this issue all articles and photos are by Tom Seres unless otherwise indicated.