

THE RED BARON SPEAKS

September 2009– Larry Creakbaum

The policy of this writer is to never mention the name of an event holder or person. I am bending that policy to mention the passing of Donna Wilbur. George and Donna gave me the nick name which heads these writings when I landed at a grass strip behind a playing location at Houghton Lake, Michigan and won the singles. That is nothing compared to the impact they had on table shuffleboard when they started the Boardtalk in 1985. They opened the line of communications and camaraderie of the ordinary player. They started a new family that is inseparable from which new couples have merged.



Along came the Bowers rating system and the game or sport, which ever you choose to call it, has expanded. It is sad we had to lose Donna, but we need to set things in motion so we do not lose what we have gained and let things die like the board talk. We the players are responsible because we refuse to pay the price it cost to produce the product. We let people around the water cooler read are copy for no cost. The Table Shuffleboard Association along with eshuffleboard glowed brightly a few years ago but the desire of each seems to have dimmed to glowing coals. This pulpit is the oldest of all and it becomes more difficult every month to put forth the effort.

The beginning of the month I was in Cedar Park, Texas at the Texas open. There were twelve boards with over 140 registered players. I have always said 16 boards and 150 registered players was a major event. This is certainly a mid major that is rising on the charts. There were seven RV's parked in the lot out back so it is either the cost of gasoline or the economy but things are looking up. Roll call for the AB draw was to start at 4:00 and when the first name was called I punched my cell phone and at said 4:00. Then a top five player who came clear across the country to be there and had asked me where to sign up some six hours earlier, was discovered not to be signed up. About the time the adjustments were made in walks a player a player a nitch outside the top ten and wants in. The boards were posted for play at 6:20 which is entirely too long. The sponsor sale for the two events took less then one and one half hours. If event directors would adopt a rule that to play or practice on the boards within fifteen minutes of a scheduled event you must be signed up this may stop some players who intentionally wait to be last. Event three was to start at 2:00 and roll call started at 1:59. My quality of writing is slipping and I could not read my notes after that, but in my opinion the draft took entirely too long. Anyway I left early on Sunday afternoon, as it was a long way home and no one asked me to play in the doubles. I will be back, it's a great event.

I stopped at home in Indiana for two days to rest and replenish my RV and it was on north to Houghton Lake, MI. My records show I had not been there since 2002, which I did not know it had been so long. My absence was caused by my attending football games with my sons. They had three boards and they were really a challenge. One board was fast, another slow and the third, no amount of observing another person shoot could prepare you for where the weight was going to go after you released it. My practice time is limited because of my stamina. I had a great time reuniting with old friends and meeting new ones and hope the schedule allows me to return. My play was horrible. Now it is football until the end of November.