

THE RED BARON SPEAKS

September 08

Shuffleboard is like a sine curve, up and down. Two events in August show that shuffleboard bottomed out and is on the way up. First a little Indiana Shuffleboard history.

We will call the location of board's venues as they consist of American Legions, AMVETS, VFW's and private establishments. Believe it or not I got a call from a minister several years ago wanting information as he had bought a board for his church. When I first started playing Tournament Events in the late fifties and early sixties the location and time was by word of mouth. A gentleman who very seldom drank water with more additive than soda pop, who in business had reason to travel the area, would stop in at the venues where boards were located and ask the owner or manager if they would like an event. A date would be agreed to and at the next event word got passed around the water cooler where and everyone showed up. Eventually the gentleman became ill and unable to travel. Venues started establishing their own dates and publishing flyers and we ended up with weeks with no event and suddenly two or three on the same day. I stepped in with the assistance of a player who passed away last month, Larry Summy, and published a written schedule. We would call the venues every fall establish a date and the system worked well throughout the seventies, eighties and into the late nineties. Then I tried to reward the venues I thought did more for the players. A couple of new venue operators did not like the pecking order and broke the chain. Events were a little hectic for a few months but eventually fall came, the venue operators united, called a meeting, established a schedule and every thing is now organized. In the meantime the '07-'08 season (which I call September thru May) the Venues shrank to four with two of them in the small town of Bourbon. This year's meeting was held last month and adjourned in agreement with no bloody noses. The best news is there were eleven venues asking for dates. See details in eshuffleboard and TSA. So see, we are on the way up.

I just returned from the Texas Open and more encouraging news for shuffleboard as the final registered players at my last check was 150 +. There were nine RV's in the lot and mine was not one of them. It appears most players have put the cost of fuel behind them and are traveling anyway. I apologize to any one I run down as I stumbled through the crowd with my cane not being able to stop until I found something to lean on. But at least except for long distances like going through and airport I have put the wheel chair behind me. I can walk but I cannot turn or stop or have any stamina. The cost of my room got a little excessive but the cost of the rental car was reasonable except for the ruined tire by hitting a poorly designed curb. Will I return? Probably, if I can obtain reasonable lodging and at my age health is an every day issue. Like the player from Arkansas said "I don't buy any more green bananas".

Next come the local events in Indiana through out September and October which I will attend very few of as they conflict with my football schedule which I attend the Purdue home games with my sons and that will continue. Then comes Reno which with the upturn this past month and the preliminary info from NASC appears will be a huge success.