

# Horseshoe Club Offers 'Fun League' For Members

Horseshoe players reminisce over past games and why they love the sport.

By ALEXANDRIA MANSFIELD  
Daily Sun Staff Writer

To some in The Villages, warm mornings in the shade are best spent tossing horseshoes.

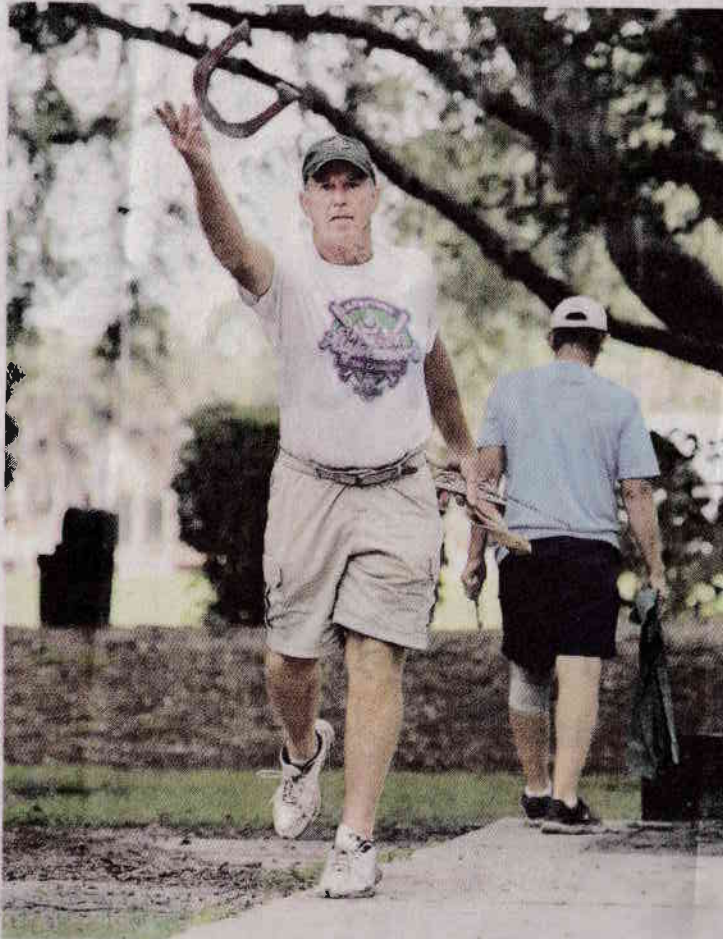
Dave Wietrzak, of the Village Hacienda, has been playing horseshoes in the Villages for over 25 years.

Growing up in Wisconsin, Wietrzak's father and uncles got him hooked on the game when he was just 10 years old. He remembers playing with his family until midnight and using the headlights of family cars to see where they were throwing.

The game has been such a central part of Wietrzak's life that he "tried to make sure I lived close to the pits when I moved (to The Villages)." He now serves as the president of The Villages Horseshoe Club.

"Horseshoes is a good game," he said, "especially if you're in The Villages. It's really good exercise - you're bending, throwing, walking."

Wietrzak said most of the



Bob Baker, of the Village of Duval, practices throwing horseshoes at Paradise Recreation Center.

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tournaments will still be taking place this fall, but social distancing and masks will likely be part of any tournaments that take place in 2020.

Neil Holmgren, of the Village of Country Club Hills, has also been playing horseshoes on and off for decades.

Anyone who hasn't played horseshoes before is will have a good time, if they go to any of their meetings, Wietrzak said. The Wednesday club meetings are the "fun league."

"Everybody is willing to help each other and give advice or pointers," he said. "Anybody who is interested is welcome."

Holmgren, the club's vice president, said his dad taught him to play when he was about 6 years old.

"It was a family game," he said. "I played basically until I left college."

After college, Holmgren said he wasn't near the rest of his family anymore and wasn't able to play as much.

"When I moved to The Villages, I started playing again," he said. "The standard story you hear is that 'I haven't played in years.' Then you come here and can play again."

Holmgren said he and his wife got involved in a multitude of sports and activities when they moved to The Villages, but it was the horseshoe group that he really wanted to join.

"I really liked the guys that were playing," he said. "They were very nice. I always loved

the game, but most of (the draw) was the camaraderie of being around friends or family. In the club, it's a similar feel."

Holmgren said he enjoys the competitive but friendly atmosphere.

"Unlike many clubs, insulting each other is the normal, friendly mode of communication," he said. "We tease each other a lot."

And, shortly after joining, Holmgren began taking on responsibilities as treasurer, webmaster, assistant tournament director and vice president.

The club meets on different days of the week, depending on skill level.

For more information about meeting times, visit [villageshc.mysite.com](http://villageshc.mysite.com).

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