



PAK President's Report July 2022

NEWS

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OLD FRIENDS, NEW FRIENDS, PICKLEBALL

I grew up in the YMCA. Kauai did not have a typical YMCA facility like it does now but did have a very organized outreach program with volunteers leading various aged clubs of boys. In those days, the YMCA served the boys clubs, and the YWCA

served the girls clubs. Starting around the third grade, one would join a Gra-Y club, then progress to a Junior Hi-Y club, and in high school you would be in Hi-Y. Many teachers were club leaders, and today I marvel at the many hours they devoted to us kids in school and in extra-curricular activities. I remember being taught a song about friendship in Gra-Y that I cherish to this day. The lyrics were simple and short, and we would sing this song in rounds. "Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold." We kept singing this song as we moved up the Y club path. Little did I know then that I would become the General Director of the Kauai YMCA, and I found myself teaching the song to (now) boys and girls in our various programs.

Recently, I had the privilege of reconnecting with an old friend. In the summer of 1968, I was hired as a camp counselor at the Honolulu YMCA Camp Erdman. I was one of about a dozen counselors, and we all got along well, but for some reason, I can only remember three now. One of those, Richard Yamada, was a year younger, and an outstanding counselor. His kids loved him, he was always where he needed to be and diligent in his duties, and a great team player. We bonded that summer, and then I never saw him again until I went to his fishing lodge in Alaska a couple of weeks ago as part of a group of twenty. Re-uniting with Richard after 54 years was the most special part of the trip, as we shared how our lives had evolved from that summer to now. It was golden.

At Pickleball Association Kauai, we realize that the game of pickleball is simple to learn, but hard to master. But, in the end, it's just a good game. What makes it special are the friendships that are forged on the pickleball courts. People are basically social animals, and the sport allows us to gather with a dash of exercise, a spirit of competition, and mostly the camaraderie that the sport offers. Teenagers are seen talking with octogenarians, sometimes about pickleball, sometimes about life. Better players teach. Lesser players learn. Doubtful points are called in favor of the opponents. (See our court etiquette guidelines under the "Let's Play" section of this website.) It boils down to friendship. When the body is protesting getting off the sofa and running around, it is friendship that drags you out there to the court. New friends. Silver, turning to gold over time.

Our dream is to have a place to call our home away from home. A place where the nets are permanent, and always at the right height at the ends and in the

middle. Where the boundary lines are not indistinct and hard to see, but bright and clear. Where the courts are smooth and safe, not filled with cracks and craters. Where picklers can go and find friends and a game anytime, not when a group has sent out dozens of text messages to come together. A place where friendships can be formed and kept, moving from silver to gold.

It is amazing that PAK, in a little more than a year has defined its purpose, attracted 259 members, and has identified TWO potential sites for our dedicated courts on the island. Our sense of urgency is exemplified in our time-line motto "In our lifetime". Even with the life extending benefits of exercise and socialization, we will lose some players before our courts are played on. I am reminded of a staunch supporter of PAK's mission who passed on at age 55 before we became a reality. Rest in peace, Leona. We carry on honoring your memory.

Until next month Aloha and Mahalo,

Nolan