

Billiards Club Newsletter

November 2026

Created by "Oh Gene" Krajeck

The Summer of 2026 has finally come to an end. It definitely was hot for the Club members that stayed here in Arizona. But certainly, for the year rounders that remained, it is definitely great that Fall has finally arrived. The 2026 -2027 season is now upon us. We will finally be able to visit and play with our snow bird club members that we haven't been with in quite some time. There is a lot of information to share in this November issue so let's get started.



The annual Club Membership Meeting is coming up. It will be conducted in the Palo Verde Room located in Sonoran Plaza on December 8th at 11:00 AM. This is the meeting when Club business and action items are discussed and approved. It is also the meeting when Board candidates are voted on and elected. So, it is an important meeting indeed.

Speaking of Club Officer elections, the candidate sign-up sheets were posted on the Club Bulletin Board in the prior month of October. If you want to be a part of and a contributor to the future of the Billiard Club, please sign up for the position of your choice.

In case you were wondering what Social Activities the Club is working on for next year, please set aside Saturday, February 6th for the Club's Annual New Year Pot Luck. This is a great time for members and guests to get together to enjoy good food and conversation. So put February 6th on your calendar.



In case you didn't see it, the Billiards Club was featured on the cover of July's edition of the Grand Lifestyles magazine. It included an explanation of the cover on page 5 and an in-depth article about our club on pages 16 and 17. This tremendous achievement happened due to the diligent work of our Club President, Rob Pulvino, and Jay Delich, Club Director with the responsibility of Club Entertainment.



The idea for this magazine article came about from a Charter Club Presidents Meeting that Rob attended. At that meeting, The Grand's marketing group, MARCOM, made a presentation concerning what MARCOM can do to market and publicize Charter Clubs. From that meeting, Rob asked Jay to work with MARCOM's Hannah Sellar to create the Grand Lifestyles magazine article. Delarita Ford, The Grand's Communications Coordinator, actually wrote the Billiards Club article. The end result was an article that promoted who we are and what we do as a Charter Club.

You may be wondering whose hands are pictured on that magazine cover. Are they the hands of a Club member or somebody that MARCOM recruited? Good question. **Well, after some digging around, I determined they are the hands of our very own Jay Delich. By the way Jay, your hands look great!!**

In case you don't know, there is a recurring section in the Grand Lifestyles Magazine entitled CLUB CONNECTIONS. This section describes the various clubs within the Grand community. The existing write-up pertaining to our Billiards Club needed some freshening up. So, the Club recruited Sandy Miller who used her literary skills to update and improve this magazine section. It was located on page 55 of the that July Grand Lifestyles issue. **Thank you, Sandy for your contribution.**

On July 2nd, the Club reserved the Billiards Room for a thank you party for MARCOM and the magazine for their interest and assistance in making this wonderful article happen. They played and learned about the game of pool, but most of all were impressed by the hospitality of our Club.

At this event, our own Jerry Briesath performed several trick shot demonstrations. In addition, he gave a talk to the group about the history of the balls that make up the game of pool. Based on his talk, I decided to do a deep dive into this subject and the result follows at the end of this newsletter. Thank you, Jerry, for this idea.

Last July, our president Rob sent out a message to Club members regarding housekeeping and how it relates to our Pool Room. He tries to keep our Pool Room neat and clean but there are some individuals that are NOT inclined to do so. Rob is asking that after play, you clean up your own mess. Don't leave empty water bottles and used tissues for someone else to discard. Put wall cues back where you found them in the racks, and put chairs back in the proper positions.

I felt that this common-sense stuff he was talking about should be included in this Newsletter issue. So please think about our Pool Room like you would keep rooms in your own home. **The Pool Room is our room; it is a part of all of us.**

This past Summer, we had an incident where inappropriate behavior was exhibited by some of our Club members. In fact, some lady members that were there found it offensive enough to leave. Foul language, inappropriate and offensive conversations that are loud enough to be heard by everyone in our SMALL room should not be happening. Please be observant of our fellow members and act accordingly.

Even though you were probably having Fun & Games this past summer, Rob has been busy with several projects to make our Pool Room more attractive and useful. For those of us that stayed here this past summer and those snowbirds returning, you will find our pool room better than ever. The first thing you will notice is that he completed the armchair restoration project. Yes, all 22 chairs have been restored. Rob even refinished Jerry's chair.

He replaced some of the warped and damaged house cues. We now have 20 house cues in new and good condition. There are 16 on the racks and 4 spares in the closet.

Rob was trained this past summer to level our pool tables and he utilized that knowledge. In addition to leveling the tables, he added lines and spots to the cloth. The head spots define the break area of the table known as the kitchen. He extended the center line about 8" forward of the foot spot and placed a hash line where the back of the rack should meet. When you rack the balls, the white diamond on the rack should be on the center of the line and the back of the rack should stop at the hash line. Doing this will give you a PERFECT racking position.

In response to some complaints, Rob had a carpet cleaning service come into our room to deep clean the carpet. They did a great job. Took out dirt, dust, and whatever else was festering beneath our feet. Doing this will freshen up our room, and make that environment more user friendly.

And finally, Rob is progressing on his quest to get his Instructor Certification. He now has 50 of the required 80 hours necessary to achieve that goal. So, if any of you would like to work on improving your game, Rob will

be happy to help.

Rob, our Pool Room is so much better thanks to you.

Summer League News

While all you Snow Birds were away, the stay-at-home Club Members participated in the Summer Tuesday Night, Wednesday Afternoon and the Friday Morning Leagues. A great time was had by everybody that played. The results of this summer activity follows.

Tuesday Night 8 Ball League – League Operator Tim Fitzpatrick

2 Bills & Change took the top spot over second place Pool Sharks by 8 games. Paul Phenow was the top individual with a 73.3% winning percentage.

Wednesday Afternoon 8 Ball League – League Operator Mike Garrett

The top spot was achieved by One Shot Wonders. Second place was taken by Cue Commanders 7 scoring points out. Paul Phenow was also the top individual player in the Wednesday Afternoon League with a 78.2% winning percentage. Congratulations Paul!

Friday Morning 9 Ball League – League Operator Charlie Fox

One Shot Wonders attained first place over second place Awe & Chalk by 10 scoring points. Tom Hansch was the top individual shooter with a 67.3% winning percentage.

Signups for our upcoming Fall Leagues were posted on the bulletin board and were taken down at 10:00 PM on October 25th. Team captains will be selected from the signups and the Leagues will use a draft system to build their respective teams. Anyone not drafted will be placed on the substitute list.

Before I leave the League News portion of the Newsletter, there is some new news regarding the upcoming Winter Leagues. There is going to be one change regarding league operators from last Spring Leagues. And that change is the Tuesday Night League that had been run by Tim Fitzpatrick. That League will now be administered by Geoff Iverson. Thank you, Tim for all your hard work. **Congratulations Geoff on your new Tuesday Night League responsibility.** We all know that you will do a great job.



Pool Knowledge

As promised, I have researched the history and the manufacturing of the pool balls that are in use today. Following is the outcome of that research. I hope you find it informative.

The game of Billiards can be traced back to 15th and 16th century Northern Europe, where the earliest balls were carved from wood. By the 1600s, high society had moved on to ivory, cut from elephant tusks. Ivory played beautifully but caused real problems: no two tusks are identical, density varies with the grain, and the material

absorbs moisture and warps over time. Before important 19th-century matches, officials would weigh and measure the balls in front of spectators just to confirm the set was fair. Ivory was also costly and, as demand grew, unsustainable. This pushed manufacturers to look for an alternative.

The first substitute, collodion, was a nitrocellulose mixture so volatile it could ignite or detonate on hard impact. Adding camphor as a plasticizer tamed it, producing celluloid. American inventor John Wesley Hyatt is generally credited with developing celluloid around 1868 – 1869 while chasing a $10,000 prize for an ivory substitute. His original ball is preserved in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History as a founding object of the plastics industry. Celluloid ended the game's dependence on ivory, but it remained flammable and could crack or shatter under a hard break. Manufacturers later reinforced celluloid with ground cattle bone, improving consistency enough that several champion players praised its playing feel over ivory.

In 1907, Belgian-American chemist Leo Baekeland invented Bakelite, a phenol-formaldehyde resin made by polymerizing phenol and formaldehyde under heat and pressure. It was harder, more heat-resistant, and non-flammable, and by the 1920s it had displaced celluloid as the standard, even among wealthier players. Phenolic resin, a more refined descendant of Bakelite, formed under even greater pressure followed, and became the industry standard by the 1950's – 60's, a position it still holds. Modern phenolic balls are dense, extremely hard, and essentially uniform from ball to ball and set to set.

The best-known name in the industry is Saluc, a Belgian company, making billiard balls since the 1920's under the Aramith brand, used by an estimated 80% of players worldwide and most major professional tours. Saluc manufactures its own phenolic resin in-house, giving it full control over the hardness, density, and elasticity that determine how a ball plays. From raw resin to finished ball, the process runs roughly 13 steps over about 23 days: casting, multi-stage heat-curing, precision grinding, and polishing. The heat-curing stabilizes the material and produces a hard, glass-like ("vitrified") surface that resists wear on both the ball and the cloth.

Every Saluc ball is checked against seven criteria before it can be sold: **density, balance** (center of gravity precisely centered), **diameter tolerance, roundness, color precision, surface polish,** and **brilliance**. Robotic and computerized equipment monitors diameter and roundness continuously during grinding and polishing, and color formulation and number engraving are computerized so a replacement ball ordered years later still matches an existing set. Even so, every ball still gets a final manual check before leaving the factory.

Based on the research that went into this piece, I started to wonder what brand of balls that our Club uses. After asking Rob Pulvino, the Club uses the Aramith brand billiard balls. So, we as Club members are using the same billiard balls that the professionals use. That is pretty impressive indeed!!

After you have read this article, please take a second to think about the quality and the engineering that went into the billiard balls that you are about to break.