



ARTY EMANUELE/Staff photographer

Paul D'Orazio, 70, of Livonia sends his bocce ball after the pallino during a friendly game of back-yard bocce ball. Looking on are John Leone (left), 64, of Waterford Township, John Del Signore of Livonia, owner of the court, and Saverio Vilella, 60, of Livonia. Senior citizens like D'Orazio, Leone and Vilella find bocce ball a fun way to get some light exercise.

Boccie ball 'For senior citizens, it's great'

By Richard Lech
staff writer

Paul D'Orazio and Saverio Vilella of Livonia and John Leone of Waterford Township have each been playing bocce ball for more than half a century. But their age hasn't dampened their enjoyment of the game or their enthusiasm for it.

"For senior citizens it's great," said Leone, 64, who plays regularly with D'Orazio, 70, and Vilella, 60. "You get your exercise, but you're not lifting too much. If you've ever watched them play shuffleboard, this is the same thing. Only shuffleboard you need a court. Bocce you can play anywhere."

Bocce ball is one way local senior citizens keep active. But many other organized activities, ranging from disco dancing to bicycling trips, are available.

Bocce is a relatively inexpensive game for senior citizens to take up. The game is played, ideally, on a 12-foot-by-50-foot limestone court. But the court isn't absolutely necessary. In fact, some players prefer the challenge of the uneven terrain of a back-yard lawn.

"There are so many different versions," Leone said. "It's like pizza: Who makes the best?"

BESIDES A wide-open space, the basic requirements for a game of bocce are a set of bocce balls, which cost no more than \$50 and last a lifetime, at

least two players and some wine to wet down throats parched in friendly arguments over whose ball is in the best position.

The rules are easy to learn. First someone tosses out a small plastic ball called a pallino (in the old days in the Old Country the balls were made of wood). Then the first player rolls or tosses one of the larger bocce balls and tries to get as close as he can to the pallino. The second player, whose bocce balls are of a different color than his opponent, keeps throwing until he tops his foe's throw or runs out of balls. The first player then throws the remainder of his balls, and points are scored by the person with the ball closest to the pallino.

This Observer & Eccentric reporter, a bocce novice, tried his hand at the game. After throwing the ball too hard a couple of times and watching it fly past the pallino, he settled down, rolled the ball gently and did surprisingly well.

But, while the basic rules of the sport are easy to learn, the strategy can get involved. The old-time players take their time before throwing the ball, map out exactly what kind of arc they will put on the ball, decide whether they will bank it off the court wall, determine whether it would be better to knock their opponent's ball away from the pallino or just sneak in close to the ball on their own.

WHILE SOME seniors are concen-

trating on the way the bocce ball bounces, others are participating in such activities as golf, swimming, fishing, disco dancing and field trips. The Wayne/Westland Schools Senior Adult Program, for instance, has planned several hiking and biking tours for this summer. The program even supplies the bikes for those seniors who don't have any, and three-wheelers for those who have trouble keeping their balance.

"About 25 percent of our seniors are very active," said Folly Malaney, the program's supervisor. "They've been active all of their life, and they want to continue to be. We try to provide that for them."

The program also offers swimming classes on Saturday mornings at John Glenn High School and golf classes on Saturdays at the Wayne Community Center. But while the program's winter, spring and fall dockets are loaded with events, Mrs. Malaney said the summer program is going to be a bit slimmer — this summer, at least.

"We hope to have a small summer program in July and August," Mrs. Malaney said. "We'll have some crafts and oil painting, and we hope to have the hiking and biking tours as a group. Plus we plan to take some field trips. We'll go to Chesaning for the Showboat and go to a couple of Tiger games."

ANOTHER LOCAL program for senior citizens is the Westland Department of Aging Senior Friendship Center. Ac-



cording to deputy director Sylvia Kozarsky, the center works with 17 different local senior-citizen groups in helping them plan their activities and trips. The center offers classes such as exercise, horticulture, leather working, sewing, woodworking, macramé and ceramics — even a disco-dancing class, in which the seniors pick up on the latest dance steps.

Mrs. Kozarsky's department also plans such special events as the Golden Jubilation Ball in May, in which a Senior Citizen of the Year is honored, and field trips to places like Kingsville, Ontario. And on June 18, the center will have its first annual picnic, featuring such summer fun as softball, egg tosses, water-balloons, tosses and other events.

Like the school district's program, the city program does offer a monthly bingo.

Cranbrook has seniors program

Cranbrook — the 300-acre educational and cultural center on Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills — has a variety of stimulating summer activities planned.

The science museum is already open daily and half-hour planetarium shows are given Wednesday, Saturdays and Sundays. The telescope is open for viewing on Saturday evenings.

Cranbrook's gardens consist of 40 acres of natural and man-made beauty, including towering pines, fieldstone terraces, cascades, fountains, an oriental garden and statuary. The gardens are open daily 1-5 p.m.

Cranbrook House, the original home

of Cranbrook founders George and Ellen Scripps Booth, is open 2-4 p.m. Sundays in July and August (except Aug. 2).

Special summer programs include Elderhostel, a one-week program for adults 60 and older. Participants explore academic and cultural subjects while living on the Cranbrook campus.

A soccer clinic for youngsters emphasizes individual skills, team tactics and positional play. The Cranbrook Theatre School, in its 40th year, offers theatrical training from students third grade through college level.

For more information on all of Cranbrook's programs call 645-3878.

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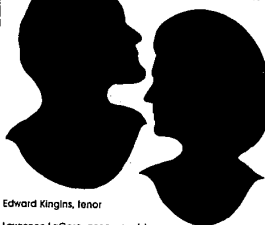
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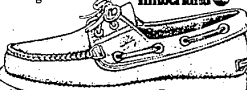
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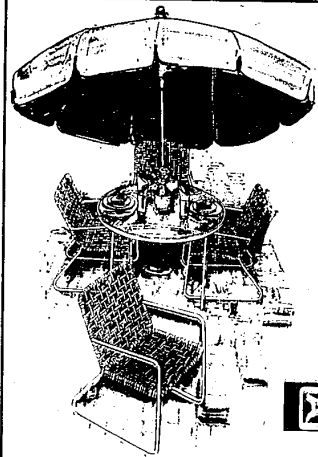
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