



The Illinois Billiard Club

"The Country Club of Pool and Billiards"

1975 - 28th Anniversary - 2003

"Billiards in America"

By Jim Parker

Since its 15th century birth, the game of billiards has been divided into two distinctively different classifications. Known simply as public, and private. In America, there are a lot of things wrong with the public side of billiards (all cue games). Over a hundred and forty years ago, along with horse racing and baseball, billiards gained the reputation as an organized professional sport. A reputation it lost over fifty years ago. Today, billiards displays as much chance of ever again becoming a popular professional organized sport in America, as a three-legged horse winning the "Kentucky Derby" ...with the horse as a five-to-one favorite simply because the thoroughbred didn't have the choice of its handicap ... billiards did.

The public side of billiards has for generations seen the game kicked about, exploited and given little dignity. Even today, and scarcely the policy of respected sports in America, billiards still promotes itself through all-night pool tournaments hosted for days on end. And continually proves itself as little more than a sideshow to a progressive American society.

In the United States, with its endless lists of ever-growing ballparks, golf courses, ice arenas, sports stadiums, etc., etc., billiards has failed to maintain even the simplest of the game itself, supported facilities. By neglect and lack of social respect, the traditional "pool hall" is fast becoming a vestige of Americana. ...And being replaced with today's, children beware, "alcho halls."

In retrospect to other games offering a virtual wealth of professional sports opportunities to the youth of our nation, games that by sound leadership have earned and maintained the reputation as popular professional sports ... as tennis, golf, baseball, and the like ... billiards, aside from its hundred years of marketing ploys and unfulfilled promises of a better tomorrow, has given the children of our nation little or nothing.

And so are a few of the problems and dark sides of billiards. All of which are not unsolvable by people with desire to do so. People, living in a country where optimism is characteristic of their nations achievements and time honored values. And clearly, the game of billiards itself has no clouds so dark its social and competitive brilliance will ever be blocked from the eyes of those shown its true and wholesome version. ...And given the opportunity to understand and appreciate it.

All of this now said, the principle reason for the games more promising existence has been the private side of our American society. Having evolved within most every detail in complete contrast to the public side of billiards. Most specifically, history tells us it has been within private homes, private clubs, schools, civic, community and fraternal organizations that billiards has managed to maintain a level of dignity, integrity and usefulness to an often more progressive side of society. It is within this division of billiards that the game and society itself has realized its greatest gains. Gains brought about by certain individuals, that through their devotion to the betterment of humankind have for over a hundred years been the gatekeepers of billiards wholesome characteristics, and mental, physical and social contributions to society.

The following is a true story written in tribute to such an individual. A humanitarian, who inspired by

love of his fellow man, early on in life, began charting a course of human kindness that today has transported thousands to the shores of personal betterment. An individual referred to as simply ... "Mr. Anonymous."

"Mr. Anonymous "

In the long history of American billiards, in addition to their exceptional skill with a billiard cue, there have been thousands of people that have gone far beyond merely winning games of pool and three-cushion billiards.

By personal choice, many of these good and honorable people seem to live in a world of anonymity, when in complete contrast, all too many of billiards scoundrels and doomsayers are given public notoriety. And upon occasion, even given top billing and illogically portrayed as billiards heroes. Proof of this is often found in many of the articles published in the games magazines and newspapers. Often containing more stories of social disinterest, than occasional expressions of "Thanks" to those genuinely deserving of that seldom used word.

What anomalous logic displayed by a national billiard organization would encourage their listing of a known scoundrel as an inductee into an industry's Hall of Fame ... will forever remain a question unanswerable by proof of honor and sound logic. This brief mention is not to be considered an act to discredit anyone having unjustly been bestowed this honor ... after all, by the way they lived and their lack of respect for society, and even themselves, they've already brought that distinction of dishonor to their own doorstep.

The purpose of this story is to stop for a few moments and give thanks to someone that has for his entire adult life been an anonymous giver to humanity. He's probably the last person on earth that would ever recognize himself as someone special. Very special might I add ... to literally thousands of young men of whom are thankful for having had the opportunity of knowing this icon of education ... most specifically, as their high school theology teacher, their mentor ... and their friend.

Presenting this man these few moments in the sun and words of thanks is not without risk of offending him and his preferred anonymous existence. However, by the closing of this story, in hopes others might learn from his example, I'm relatively certain he'll understand exactly why he's being honored.

Some fourteen years ago a Chicago newspaper featured a story concerning a high school theology teacher in the process of organizing a billiard club for the school's students. A club that would provide its enrollees an extra curriculum school activity. Arrangements had been made by this industrious educator, to host their weekly activities at a local billiard and bowling alley, that at the time was showing signs of more wear and despair, than personal care ... it has since been torn down.

Remembering my own childhood interest in billiards and ongoing efforts to seek out and impossible to find upscale billiard facility, I immediately sent off a letter offering our billiard scholar and his students the use of our private club for their weekly classes and tournaments. He accepted. With exception of a few years when first moving our club from Chicago to our now country location, every winter, our educator has on a once a week schedule, brought to our



Photo Courtesy of Illinois Billiard Club

"Mr. Anonymous."
Or better known as
Mr. Stanley Kastelic..



Photo Courtesy of Illinois Billiard Club

Stan Kastelic's and St. Rita High School's first 1989 cue club.



Photo Courtesy of Illinois Billiard Club

Chicago's, St. Rita High School and the IBC's first "Father and Son," 1993 dinner and billiard banquet. An annual event now celebrating its tenth anniversary this March of 2003. All resulting through Mr. Kastelic's visionary efforts and promotional support of fellow IBC member, Mr. Joseph Fanelli.

club, legions of young smiling faces. All of whom, for every passing year have never ceased to amaze me with their incredible sense of honor and respect ... not to mention how quickly, under the direction of our scholarly role model, have most all become respected opponents at the billiard table.

For the average "All American Good Guy," all of this would have already qualified for a listing in the "World Hall of Fame" ... a distinct class of illustrious humanitarians where truly ... No Scoundrels Or Doomsayers Are Allowed!

When looking further into the life of our Mr. Anonymous, we find his interest in teaching the youth of our nation one of its oldest games is only a pittance of his acts of human kindness. Aside from his regular duties as Chicago's, Saint Rita High School's theology teacher, after concluding his winter instructional classes of billiards, he begins yet another season of teaching other sporting activities, ranging from golf to volleyball.

For the past several years, Mr. Anonymous has graciously offered my wife Bonnie and I tickets for plays hosted at various Chicago south suburban schools. Until recently, we've never been able to attend. Finally one day, Bonnie and I made it a point to begin getting out more often, and what could possibly be nicer than attending a live play and late dinner.

Authored by Thomas Meehan, the play was titled and written about that loveable little orphan girl, "Annie." Before the opening act and when reviewing the play's program, guess whose name appeared in the actors directory? If you guessed our theology teacher ... you just won the Christmas turkey!

Of course, playing only one single roll, that to most everyone else on the planet would have been a memorable achievement in itself, would never do for our hero. Oh no, he played the part of four different characters, changing costumes and memorizing lines for all four parts! Had the leading roll not required a four-foot, eleven year old little girl ... it wouldn't have come as a surprise (least of all to Bonnie and I), if our diverse scholar, would have somehow managed to portray Annie herself!

For some time Bonnie and I have been considering reinstating a program we first began some 20 or 25 years ago ... our IBC junior membership. Today's cost would be a one-time registration fee of \$175, with annual renewals of \$75.

As an expression of appreciation, and validation for all of his lifetime efforts of helping others, with emphasis on the youth of our nation, Bon and I have created a new junior membership named in honor of Saint Rita's great behemoth himself, Mr. Stanley Kastelic, or perhaps I should say ... "Mr. Anonymous."

This perennial membership shall be granted without financial cost to any current and future students Mr. Kastelic elects to enroll and maintain active in his Saint Rita cue club. Further, in addition to Mr. Kastelic's existing Thursday afternoon billiard sessions hosted at the IBC, beginning Saturday, February 1, 2003, for the purpose of providing their club's weekly tournaments and lessons, Saturday mornings and early afternoons from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. will remain available for "The Stanley Kastelic Junior Members."

Also, Sunday mornings from 10 am until 2 pm, along with any other fellow IBC members, the club shall be available for open play ... an opportunity to enjoy a Sunday breakfast buffet and a day of billiards with family and friends.

A warm and friendly welcome to our new IBC, "Stanley Kastelic Junior Members"

Phillip Paoletti, Chicago, IL / Freddie Luster, Chicago, IL / Eladio Martinez, Chicago, IL Anthony Bertucci, Chicago IL / Matt Grandy, Chicago, IL / Luis Sifuentes, Chicago, IL Alex Calderon, Chicago, IL / Keith Heumann, Chicago IL. / Alex Calderone, Chicago, IL Matthew Grayson, Chicago, IL. / John Carbone, Chicago, IL / Chet Dober, Chicago, IL Steve Koziol, Chicago, IL / Benjamin Almazan, Chicago, IL / Pat Malone, Chicago, IL Javier Diaz, Chicago, IL. / Joseph Hernandez, Chicago, IL / Pat Bauer, Chicago, IL Nelson Perez, Chicago, IL / Derek Davis, Chicago, IL / Clayton Lindsay, Chicago, IL Clayton Lindsey, Chicago, IL / Frank Garvin, Chicago IL / Jonathan Daniel, Chicago, IL Matt Ilginis, Palos Heights, IL / Martin Roland, Chicago IL

Eddie Baley, Chicago, IL / Jonathan Melson, Chicago, IL Luis Mayorga, Chicago, IL / Jason Downey, Chicago, IL

"To you Stan Kastelic, you cherished icon of human kindness, from everyone that's ever had the pleasure of knowing you ...Our Profound and Eternal Thanks."

Jim and Bonnie Parker & The Illinois Billiard Club

Do you know a Mr. or Mrs. Anonymous?

Help promote the good guys. ...While at the same time boost the integrity and popularity of the game of billiards. Do you personally know someone that through the game of billiards, have over the years, continually, and without financial gain, gone out of his or her way to help and inspire others? If so, let me know about your billiard humanitarian by writing a short story (500 words or less) and e-mail it to: The Illinois Billiard Club at PJmandBon@aol.com.

Time permitting, I write for a national billiard publication and Chicago land newspapers. While it would be impossible to have all of your stories published, I will see to it, pending available space, at least one story will be published every other month.



Photo Courtesy of Illinois Billiard Club

Fourteen years after its first appearance, and without one bad roll, the St. Rita "Sharks" are still in first place...As our nations inspiring example of one man's dedication to building another man's character, and an industries reputation.

By their inspiring examples, it's the very people in your forth coming stories that have long since been the one's of most interest to the positive and progressive side of our American society.

The Illinois Billiard Club is the oldest, self-owned, operated and prestigious private billiard club in the United States. Complete with an adjoining hundred-seat banquet

room. The club was founded for the preservation and promotion of the elegant, historical, professional and social side of billiards. The IBC is not a poolroom, barroom or any other form of public place of amusement. Yet by its design, popularizes the game of billiards to all positive sides of society. Further information can be found either by writing to: The Illinois Billiard Club / 8446 Archer Avenue / Willow Springs, IL 60480. Or by visiting: www.IllinoisBilliardClub.com.

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