

CrossCourt

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Fall 2008

missourivalley.usta.com

USTA League Player Leads A High-Flying Life

Also Inside

Tennis on Campus Resources

&

Hispanic Heritage Month

Vietnamese Tennis Community Growing in OKC



MISSOURI VALLEY



The USTA Missouri Valley publishes CrossCourt quarterly, focusing specifically on the members and events in the section.

Your feedback is welcome.

NEW ADDRESS!

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MEMBERSHIP FAQ

Q: How do I update my contact information with USTA?

A: Change of address information, including updating your e-mail address can be done online at usta.com/membership, through calling USTA Member Services at 1-800-990-USTA (8782) or by emailing directly memberservices@usta.com.

Q: I can't remember my member number. How can I get it?

A: Call 1-800-990-USTA (8782) to obtain your membership number.

Q: Can I renew my membership or upgrade it to a 5 year membership online?

A: Yes, go to usta.com/membership.

Summer Behind Us - Support the USTA Mission!

Wow! What a summer it has been! There has been lots of junior and adult tournament play, Jr. Team Tennis play which included our section championships in August, and league play which is just now finishing up for the 2008 season. Sprinkle in World TeamTennis, the Olympics, the Paralympics, the ROHO National Wheelchair Indoor Championships, League Section Championships presented by Chrysler and the US Open and you can hardly catch your breath! What a terrific US Open it was with Americans winning the women's title and the men's doubles title. Even better, an American won the Junior Girls US Open title.

The last time an American junior girl won the Junior US Open was in 1995. The winner then: Tara Snyder of Wichita, Kan.!

Our NJTL chapters held their Rallies this summer, high schools are gearing up for their no-cut programs and entire school districts are considering the benefits of tennis in their PE curriculums. Many of our local Community Tennis Associations were also hard at work growing their summer programs. School is now back in session and collegiate Tennis on Campus clubs are beginning to organize as they work their way towards the Campus

Championships in March 2009 in Springfield, Mo. Know a student on a college campus that doesn't have a tennis club team? Send them to us and we'll empower them to get one started!

As we enter a transition time for many district boards as well as our section board, it's good for all of us to remember our mission: ***promote and develop the growth of tennis***. There's room for everyone to contribute to the mission! Recruit some new players to the game, welcome back former players by inviting them to join your league team, volunteer with your local CTA, volunteer with your district, help organize/coach a Jr. Team Tennis team, captain a new league team.

Please mark your calendar for December 5-7, 2008, to attend our Annual Conference in Overland Park, Kan. You can learn about all our programs and how you can help. It's a great opportunity to meet your CTA, district and section leadership. Look for more information on our website.

I'll be attending several district meetings in the next few months leading up to our Annual Conference. I hope to have an opportunity to meet you and hear your thoughts about the USTA Missouri Valley heading into 2009.

See you on the courts! It's Showtime!



WHEN IS MY DISTRICT MEETING?

HEART OF AMERICA
November 19
Hallbrook Country Club
Leawood

KANSAS
October 19
Wichita

IOWA
October 5
Amana Colonies

November 15
Iowa City
Awards Ceremony

MISSOURI
November 8
Cooper Tennis Complex
Springfield

NEBRASKA
November 2
Omaha

OKLAHOMA
November 15
Oklahoma City

ST. LOUIS
November 21
Hilton Ballpark
Awards Ceremony



Inside This Issue

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Tennis enthusiast Jimmy Vo brings tennis to the Vietnamese community in Oklahoma City.

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From The Alley

Letters to the Editor

Tennis Fuels My Fire!

I received my CrossCourt yesterday. Well done! I particularly enjoyed reading about Steve Gerdes.

The Tennis Block Party snapshot captured one of the memories that fuel my fire! Thank you.

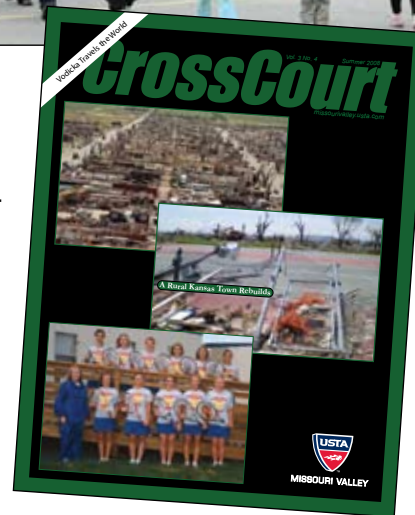
Jane Hines
Omaha, Neb.

Thanks for the Coverage!

Thanks for mentioning the Plaza Tennis Center as a Top 50 Tennis Welcome Center and the Husband and Wife tournament in the CrossCourt. The event was a great success!

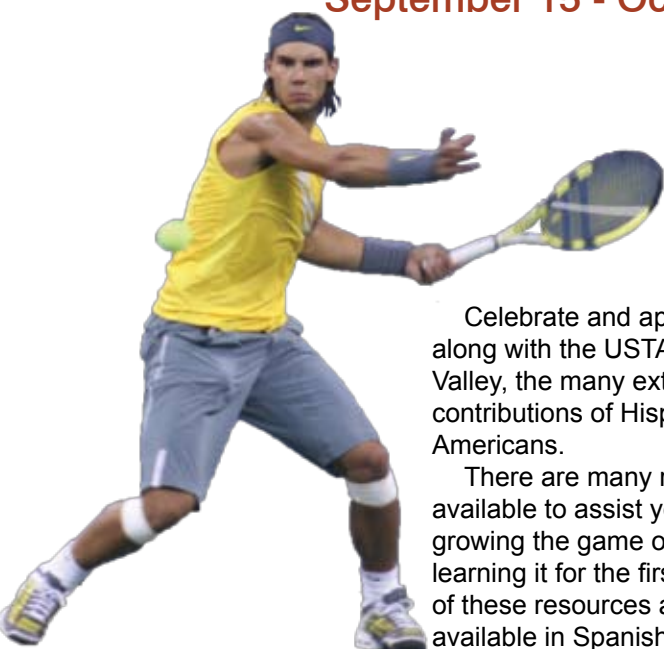
Scott Hanover
Kansas City, Mo.

CrossCourt welcomes your comments and suggestions. If you'd like to see your comments in a future issue, e-mail crosscourt@movalley.usta.com.



Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 - October 15



Celebrate and applaud, along with the USTA Missouri Valley, the many extraordinary contributions of Hispanic Americans.

There are many resources available to assist your efforts in growing the game of tennis, or learning it for the first time. Many of these resources are even available in Spanish!

BILINGUAL & SPANISH RESOURCES

- Bilingual brochure - Ven y juega tenis (*with tennis terms!*)
- Pancho Gonzales brochure
- Individual USTA membership applications
- Rafael Nadal - Play Tennis flyer
- List of Spanish speaking tennis pros
- National website - USTAenEspañol.com
- Tennis Block Party marketing kit
- USTA League Tennis marketing kit
- Community Tennis Association marketing kit
- Dedicated e-mail address - tenislatino@movalley.usta.com

For more information on programs or resources, contact the USTA Missouri Valley at 888-368-8612 or tenislatino@movalley.usta.com

Play Tennis in School

Want to play tennis before, during and after school? We think you should - so we're here to help make it happen! The USTA School Tennis program is designed to introduce the sport to youth and to encourage and support schools that provide it.

A key element of USTA School Tennis is to get children playing games right away on teams in intramural or interscholastic extracurricular programs. Children as young as 6 years old can play QuickStart Tennis, while middle and high schoolers will enjoy the co-ed format of Jr. Team Tennis.

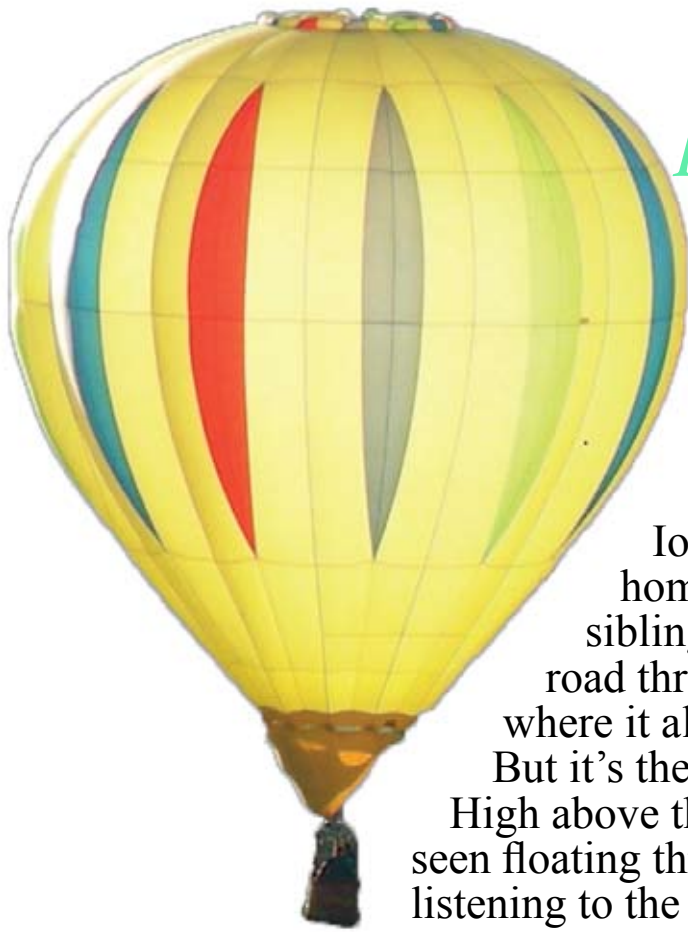


Playing tennis in schools can lead to playing in Jr. Team Tennis and then winning the Missouri Valley Section Championship, like this 18-and-under advanced team from Barry Park in Kansas City.

Following up with basic skill instruction in physical education classes will enhance the extracurricular programs. The Missouri Valley will also provide free teacher workshops that demonstrate methods for introducing tennis to large numbers of students in schools that may not have traditional tennis courts. Schools may also access discounted equipment and grants to help with the purchase of tennis equipment.

With all these new players, coaches with a no-cut policy can register online and have access to an advisory board and support funding to help pay for additional coaches or equipment.

If your school doesn't have tennis, contact Sue Riemann today at 913-322-4836 or e-mail her at riemann@movalley.usta.com



A Flight of Love

by Richard Dedor

all photos courtesy of Susan Stamats

Almost a quarter-century ago, she fell in love.
First with a man, then with a balloon.

Both would change her life.

Life for Susan Stamats began in Andrews, Iowa, a small town 70 miles east of her current home in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. One of eight siblings, Stamats has taken the long and winding road through the country-side only to arrive right back where it all began.

But it's the journey that makes the present so beautiful. High above the City of Five Seasons, she can often be seen floating through the sky in a brightly colored balloon, listening to the world below.

Prior to returning to Cedar Rapids and finding her way into the vast blue sky, Stamats would find herself living in Hollywood, Calif., San Francisco, Alexandria, Va., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. and Hollywood, Fla., working in multimedia audio and sound, an industry that was just finding its footing.

Her experiences in the late 1960s and early 70s ranged from editing sound - before there were computers - to working in an audio/visual department when no one knew what to do with the material being produced. During this time she also took up photography, learning from others, but also teaching herself how to take pictures and develop them.

On a lark, she sent a photo to a contest and ended up having a few paragraphs about her, along with the photo, printed in the New York Times.

Each of her stops was a stepping stone to her life today.

She returned to Iowa in 1977 when she joined Stamats, the nation's leading provider of marketing solutions for higher education institutions.

Back in Iowa, again working in multimedia, she met her late husband, Peter in 1984 (they married in 1988), and he immediately started teaching her how to fly hot air balloons. Peter himself became hooked in 1974 and started a hot air balloon company, Buzzards Glory Balloon Company, which Susan operates today.

Soon, she was certified to fly and they were in the air every chance they had.

"It's really addictive," Susan says. "It's so incredible and it's the most exhilarating thing to experience."

Now settled into life in Iowa once again, she and her husband got involved with Earthwatch, a non-profit organization that "brings science to life for people concerned about the Earth's future."

Susan tells a story of when she and Peter were in Botswana in

1993 and sleeping in a tent. They were in the woods, unprotected from the wildlife around them, when everyone on the trip was sure there was a lion among them in camp. Suddenly there was movement on the zipper to their tent. Susan reacted quickly, kicking the animal through the tent, causing it to run away. Peter slept through the whole ordeal. Luckily, it turned out to be just a hyena.



Stamats plays in numerous tournaments during the year throughout the section. She only started playing tennis in her 40s.

Earthwatch, an international non-profit organization, conducts research projects all over the world. "You don't have to be skilled," Stamats said. "The best part is that you get to see the country in a different way."

In 1996, Susan and Peter traveled to Nepal and were able to travel through small towns and villages. "That Beatles song, 'love, all you need is love,' was written about these people," she said. "They were so kind."

Those experiences, from her stops in the United States, her earthly excursions and flying high above the sky, have made her

life all about love.

The ballooning, while fun, is also competitive. They traveled all across the country, competing against other balloonists. Their stops included Albuquerque, N.M., Anderson, S.C., the Wisconsin Dells and Canton, Ohio.

Even though she loved ballooning, Susan realized she was losing time in the ballet studio with all the time she was spending in the air.

Yes, ballet. At 40, Susan was taking upwards of seven classes a week, just for the exercise. "I realized I was only going to class one or two times a week," she said, "and I wanted some kind of exercise."



When she's not playing tennis, or practicing ballet, Susan is hot air ballooning over cities across the country.

So, she took up tennis. Now she plays all the time, including this year in Oklahoma City at the USTA Missouri Valley League Championships. Before slowly flying off to another ballooning competition, of course.

During their years of travel, Susan and Peter (who passed away in 2003 from a rare cancer) amassed quite an art collection and had more than 300 pieces on display at the Stamats headquarters in Cedar Rapids. Then the sky, a brilliant bright blue sky which Susan and Peter loved so much, turned gray and opened up the floodgates.

As the river waters rose this June and spilled from their banks,

Susan and the staff at Stamats had to use a boat to reach the Stamats office in downtown Cedar Rapids. Luckily, they were able to save all the art, moving everything up to the second floor office. But things still aren't the same.

"It's just devastating," she said. "It still is." She still sees the trash on the curbs. Neighborhoods are still without power. "It will be a long time before the city is back."

The offices have since been gutted, but they will rebuild.

It's a place she's called home for the majority of her life. Now her new journey is time spent with her dog. It's spent with time on the tennis court with her friends and teammates and dancing in her ballet shoes. And drifting, always drifting, through the evening sun on a journey of love. ●

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RESOURCES & INFORMATION FOR YOUR CLUB

visit missourivalley.usta.com and tennisoncampus.com for more information

Grants: The National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) offers grants to beginning programs to help get your team started and to support established teams to help you grow! The official grant form is located at www.nirsa.org.

Marketing: Besides logos and flyers that can be customized, we offer a complete marketing kit, "Here Come da Fuzz" to all clubs!

Awards: Nominate your college or university's tennis club for the **2008 Outstanding Tennis on Campus Program Award**. Teams must have conducted a Tennis on Campus program for the 2007-2008 school year, and be currently registered with the USTA Missouri Valley.

Nominations are due to the USTA Missouri Valley Award Committee no later than Friday, October 10, 2008. The nomination form can be found on our website at missourivalley.usta.com. The 2008 Outstanding Tennis on Campus Program recipient will be recognized at the 2008 USTA Missouri Valley Annual Conference, Saturday, December 6, 2008 at the Sheraton Overland Park Hotel in Overland Park, Kan.





Building a Community by Eli Gieryna

A local tennis fanatic brings tennis to those who wouldn't normally see it.

When Jimmy Vo came to the United States in 1977, he had no tennis experience. In his native Vietnam, tennis was a game only for the rich and privileged – he never dreamed of being able to step onto a tennis court.

That changed here. To his surprise, he found that tennis was more readily available, and he fell in love with the game, becoming a top-level player and teacher.

"I was so surprised to find that anyone is allowed to play tennis here," Vo said. "If you play tennis in Vietnam, you are a king."

Now living in Oklahoma City, Vo is working to get local Vietnamese youth involved in tennis by starting a tennis program at the Earlywine Tennis Center. This past summer was the first year for the program, and it has already become a smashing success – nearly 100 kids showed up each week.

The idea for the clinic came from what he describes as a difference in demographics in Oklahoma City. Vo says that the northern part of Oklahoma City has always been a tennis power, but the southern part of the city – where many Vietnamese live – hasn't had as much exposure to tennis.

Vo decided to start a clinic along with friend, Diem Phan, that would introduce tennis to a younger generation of Vietnamese players. He needed a sponsor, and found one in the Vietnamese American Community of Oklahoma City & Metropolitan Areas of Oklahoma City.

In addition to the sponsorship, Vo and Phan also worked with the USTA Missouri Valley to get approval and assistance in organizing some of the clinics. Vo invited some USTA Missouri Valley staff to the opening and closing ceremonies for the program, and said that they were impressed with the size of the program.

"When they came out to the courts and saw all of the kids, their eyes got really big. They were very happy," Vo said.

The program took place during six weekends in the summer, with players divided into different skill levels. They advertised with flyers around the community and in the local newspaper as well. Instruction was provided by area high school students, including some of Vo's own children. His son, Rocky, is a strong player and his daughter, Julie, won the Oklahoma state championship as a junior at Westmoore High School in 2004. She now plays college tennis at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond.

Vo hopes that the program will not only provide tennis instruction to kids, but also help emphasize values that are important to Vietnamese culture and the players' heritage.

"Vietnamese culture teaches discipline and respect," Vo said. "We apply that here to tennis. We use tennis to teach that focus, not just in tennis, but in life. Knowing your heritage is important."

Vo says that having fun is the top priority of the program, but

he also stresses motivation and improvement. He told the story of a young girl who was offered a prize if she could improve on bouncing a tennis ball up-and-down with her racquet. On her first try, she got about 20 bounces; the next week she returned and was able to do 120 bounces.

Vo hopes the program, which is free to all participants, will continue to grow. He says that word-of-mouth will lead to larger numbers as more kids become interested in tennis.

"This is definitely growing," he said. "There's a real interest in tennis from this community, and they will continue to tell their friends. What is 100 kids now will be several hundred very soon."

Phan, who assists at the clinic, agreed with the positive assessment, saying, "Tennis becomes a lifestyle for them. It's really important for them to get started young, because then they can get involved in other ways – in tournaments, in USTA programs and in high school as they get older."

The program officially ended in August, but Vo is planning to have some indoor events this winter to keep the kids involved. They will start again next summer with a whole new program and, hopefully, even greater numbers of participants.

Vo says that among all the positive things to take away from tennis, it's simply a great sport to be involved in. He makes sure to drive that point home to each participant at the clinic.

"This is a game that teaches you respect and fairness, and you also get a good workout," he said. "There's no better game."

He paused and smiled.

"And best of all, you can play tennis until you're dead. What a great game." ●



Photo courtesy of Jimmy Vo

Oklahoma Tennis Service Representative, Laura Puryear, gives a high-five to one of the hundred participants at the end of the summer program.

Net Notes

Thanks OKC!

More than 1,200 tennis players from all across the section traveled to Oklahoma City over two weekends to battle in the **2008 USTA Missouri Valley League Championships presented by Chrysler.**

The event was funded in part by the **Oklahoma City**

Convention and Visitors Commission.

Blessed with unseasonably cool weather for the majority of the tournaments,

the players, officials and volunteers enjoyed six action-packed days of tennis while 19 teams will advance to the national championships.

Watch for the next issue of **CrossCourt** (in your mailboxes November 2008) for a complete listing of all the section winners of the 2008 league season. You can also "go to the net" to view all the winners of the adult league championships!



Oklahoma City
Convention & Visitors Bureau

Section Crowns Four JTT Champs

More than 130 players from four states comprised the 18 teams that competed in the USTA Missouri Valley Jr. Team Tennis Championships in August. Taking home the titles in each division were the following teams:

14-and-under Intermediate Division
Greens B, Oklahoma City

14-and-under Advanced Division
Greens A, Oklahoma City

18-and-under Intermediate Division
Branson Dominators, Branson, Mo.

18-and-under Advanced Division
Barry Park Team 1, Kansas City

Each of the four teams will advance to the USTA National Junior Team Tennis Championships, which will be held in October in Mobile, Ala.



Zach Johnson and Allison Scurry of St. Louis competed in the 2008 Jr. Team Tennis Section Championships at the Plaza Tennis Center.

Explorers Net Show-Me Cup and World TeamTennis Finals Appearance



Jeff Launius accepts the Show-Me Cup in July before the team earned a berth in the WTT Championship.

The Kansas City Explorers came within a breath of reaching the pinnacle of World TeamTennis this summer. Their only two losses were to the New York Buzz, one in the regular season and one in the championship match.

In the championship match, the Buzz won the two singles events, when Nathan defeated Dusan Vemic 5-3 in men's singles and Yaroslava Shvedova posted a 5-3 win over Kveta Peschke in women's singles. The two singles wins gave the Buzz a 10-6 lead after the first two events.

Kansas City closed the gap to 13-11 at halftime after Rennae Stubbs and Vemic scored a 5-3 mixed doubles win over Healey and Shvedova. Stubbs and Peschke then secured a 5-3 win over Shvedova and Gabriela Navratilova in women's doubles.

With the match tied at 16, heading into the final event, Healey and Patrick Briaud came up strong to close out the match, defeating the Explorers' James Auckland and Vemic 5-2. The match ended on a point when Vemic touched the net to seal the victory and the first WTT crown for the Buzz.

Also, for the first time since its inception, the Show-Me Cup, an intra-state title, is in new hands: the Explorers'. The previous two titles, including the inaugural year had been won by the Springfield Lasers.

Des Moines Honors Longtime Tennis Volunteers

On August 9, the Waveland Park tennis courts were rededicated as the **McCollum Waveland Tennis Complex** in recognition of many years of volunteer service by husband and wife **Harold and Margaret McCollum.**

Margaret (1916-2006) was inducted into the Iowa Hall of Fame in 2003 and Harold was inducted in 1974.



Harold McCollum readies his racquet in the rededication ceremony held in his honor. He and his wife Margaret volunteered in the Des Moines tennis community for over 60 years.



September 25-28

USTA Missouri Valley League Section
Championships – Mixed Doubles
Cooper Tennis Complex | Springfield, Mo.

October 3-5

BG10-18 Segment III Outdoor October
Futures
Kossover Tennis Complex | Topeka, Kan.

October 13-19

USTA \$10,000 Pro Circuit (Women)
Dwight Davis Tennis Center | St. Louis

October 14-18

National Recreation & Parks Association
National Congress
Baltimore, Md.

October 24-26

BG10-18 Segment III Indoor October
Futures
Various Sites

November 7-9

BG10-14 Segment III Super
Various Sites

November 14-16

BG16-18 Segment III Super
Various Sites

November 21-23

BG10-18 Segment III Sweet 16
Various Sites

December 5 – 7

USTA Missouri Valley Annual Conference
Sheraton Hotel | Overland Park, Kan.
SEE INFORMATION AT RIGHT

December 12-14

BG10-18 Segment III Indoor December
Futures
Various Sites

Save the Date

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2008 USTA Missouri Valley Annual Conference
December 5 - 7, 2008
Sheraton Overland Park Hotel
Overland Park, Kansas

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