

Rattling from the Old Villages to Metropolis

Interviewing David Havard (President, [Mississauga Rattlers Table Tennis Club](#))

Here, after laying down our rackets,
we sat at the bench in Woodland school's gym,
David, in his eighties with sparse white hair,
elderly yet energetic,
discussing his life journey bouncing along
with the small white sphere;
I, middle-aged with an artistic curiosity,
listening to the ups and downs beneath his quiet voice

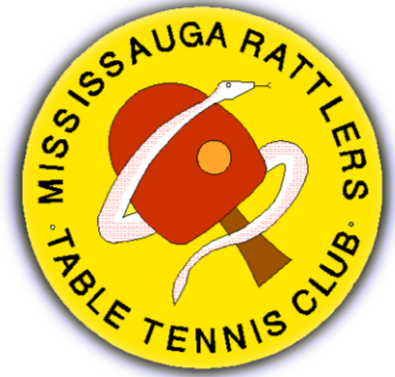
Like any long running river, a trickle of water here,
a spring there, his started from England; a young grad
who moved to Canada in 1958
and found an engineer position at Ontario Hydro.
He brought his beautiful wife over
and bought a house in Credit Woodlands to settle down.

While he pursued working and studying concurrently,
cancer found a way to his young wife.
It was tough and unbearable, she died at 29.
David sighed and paused...
I felt sorry but did not know how to console him.

I passed him some water, he took it and continued:
"Somehow, I managed to complete my Ph. D. at Waterloo
then I met a fellow student whom I like.
Now we two have celebrated our 53th anniversary,
can you imagine?"

I nodded. Yes, I could imagine
the small white sphere spinning ...ups and downs...
David swung his racket and tried to manage.

Six colleagues from Ontario Hydro Research Labs joined
David to found Rattlers Table Tennis Club...The first ever!
He smiled, "It was in 1972, even before Mississauga,
the city was formed! Our first home was
Springbank Community centre originally
the two-room Erindale village school,
now part of UTM campus.
Later we added games in Erindale Community Hall,
then expanded it to Lanor School in Etobicoke..."



1963-1973 Springbank Community Center

and joined the Woodlands community school when it opened in 1973.
Our club ran tournaments for members, annual banquets and summer picnics”

David showed me various trophies and medals, and continued:
“Over 50 years, our club has grown big and strong,
developing its own multi-cultural and dynamic harmony.”

Coimbra Antonio, a long-time member, the treasurer
chimed in: “At the very beginning, we would drive very far
to Pickering and Ajax for house leagues and matches.
We were young then and full of passion and energy!”

I winked at them and grinned,
“You both are still young and strong, so many of us here
cannot beat you in a single game!”

Both David and Antonio laughed,
“Who knows the magic of this small sphere?
It keeps us young, happy and healthy,
It also brings friendship, confidence and pride.
Look at this old photo — Becky Mc Knight third from left,
one of our club members went so far to cross Pacific Ocean,
to represent Canada at World Championship in Tokyo 1983!”

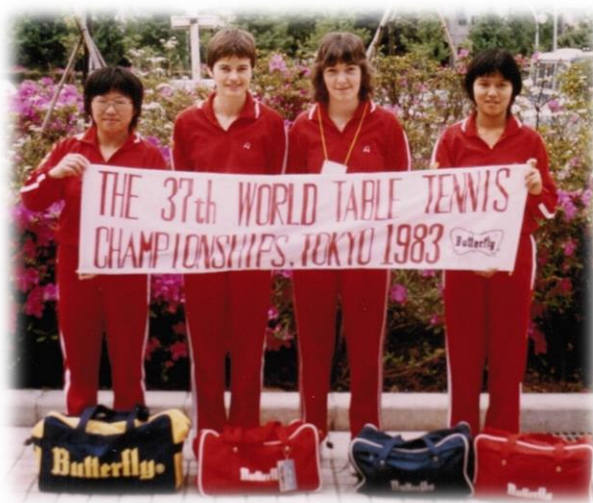
“Wow! Four women players! In 1983, I was still
in middle school in China!” I remarked.

I pointed at another photo, Tony Holmes the club’s first president
and David receiving Government of Ontario Volunteer Recognition
Award in 1986– (for establishing both TT club & community school)
and said: “Oh, so many years ago! I cannot imagine!
There must have been many high moments.
I came here only in 1999 and found an IT job in Mississauga.
Then I recognized how lucky I was to live in this beautiful city!”

“Yes, Mississauga has been bounced from small villages
and semi-rural township of Toronto to a dynamic metropolis,
even becoming the 6th biggest city in Canada!
I have lived here since 1961 and have seen the city’s changes
and our club’s! I must say I am lucky too.
Last year, at our Rattlers’ Jubilee party,
so many new and familiar faces, young and old
from diverse backgrounds celebrated with us...”
David gazed at the door, recalling many joyful gatherings...



Dave Havard, Marie Kerr, Mike Spavins



I looked around at members who were still playing their games.
They waved black and red rackets—
smash, loop, chop and spin...
Small white spheres bounced with health and happiness.
their hearts carried pride and faith;
their feet swept the game's floor.

I turned to David,
“We are so lucky! I want to thank you
and all those who have put the club together
and ceaselessly volunteered for the sport.
Today, Mississauga has many people playing
table tennis that makes them strong and well.
More clubs have been formed to follow this success.
Each week, we have great house league games
at our door step! See, this small sphere is
truly continuing rattling its magic!
Now, let us go back to join them to play!”



Julia qiulei Lin, Amber xihan Lin and Andy Hao in house league games, Jan 29 2024

Poem by Anna Yin @2024/01/30 website: <https://www.annapoetry.com/>

Check more about [Polyphonic celebration for Mississauga's 50th Anniversary](#)
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