

## **Picklers Party Hardy at Annual Club Gala**

By Bob Zyontz

*They say the joint was rocking  
Going 'round and 'round  
Yeah, reeling and a rocking  
What a crazy sound  
Well, they never stopped rocking  
Till the moon went down*

Chuck Berry's lyrics perfectly captured the vibe of Friday evening, October 17. That night, members of the Regency Pickleball Club and their guests – all 228 of them – partied like it was 2099 at the Club's annual Gala to celebrate another successful season of fun and friendship.

Earlier that day, several members of the event committee – Rosemary Spinelli, Wendy Strauss, Meg Pribyl, Club President Lisa Citron, and Event Chair Helen Zyontz – eagerly transformed the ballroom into a pickleball-themed paradise bathed in green, yellow, and blue. From placemats, napkins, and keepsakes to centerpieces, mums, and balloons, the intent was to create a unique mood that would make jaws drop when the doors opened. Special recognition goes to Rosemary Spinelli, the creative force behind the design strategy, along with husband Joe and daughter Jade, who both had a hand in helping the committee complete the ballroom setup right down to the smallest detail.

As soon as the clock struck 7:00 PM the magic began. As the crowd filed in they were greeted by Club volunteers selling 50/50 raffle tickets to help fundraise for the Unicorn Foundation. This 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, based in New Jersey, supports families dealing with pediatric cancer through financial assistance that includes food, gas, mortgages, medical bills, and more. Needless to say, business was brisk, and how could it not be when you had the all-star sales team of Maxine Manber, Sheri Nagel, Wendy Strauss, Georgette Bruno, Meg Pribyl, Debbie Gabor, Karen Calder, Bruce Mineroff, Sharon Mineroff, and Rick Katz selling tickets for this worthy cause? More on this later.

Like previous seasons, 2025 created an abundance of memories for the Club's 322 members that were candidly captured by official photographer Tom Cullen and once again turned into a thoroughly entertaining digital presentation with soundtrack by Club Treasurer and Board member Jay Gumnic.

Kudos to Lisa Citron for another fine job as master of ceremonies and to Helen Zyontz for quarterbacking this very complex event. High praise was also in order for Helen's hard-working event committee. This dedicated group, that also included Arlene Goldberg, worked for months to ensure that the 2025 Gala would exceed everyone's expectations and be a night to remember.

All attendees were treated to a dinner buffet provided by Ultimate Caterers who served a three-course meal with a variety of entrees and side dishes to satisfy even the most discerning palates.

When members were not dining, DJ Tommy Smooth and Company turned the room into a '90s dance club with a playlist that had everyone up on their feet. With the music pulsating all evening, and with the dance floor packed, attendees could not resist showing off the moves that made them legends back in the day.

The presentation of the Panson Cup is always the highlight of these celebrations. Named for Regency pickleball pioneer Barry Panson, the Cup is awarded each year to the pickleball league's championship team. Team Zyontz won the Cup in 2024 giving all the players bragging rights for the next 12 months. However, nothing lasts forever. The time had come for defending captain Bob Zyontz to turn the page and present the 2025 Panson Cup to captain Arlene Goldberg and Team Goldberg for their championship season.

Taking a victory lap along with captain Arlene were Les Kaplan, Russ Goldberg, Warren Kaplan, Michael Horn, Steve Lasky, Vijay Sarathy, Rochelle Berger, Barry Thaler, Marci Morgenstern, Andy Gerstein, Moshe Azoulai, Judy Azoulai, Eva Nyman, Prem Gupta, Anne Schuman, and Maurice Benous.

Fun is job one for the Regency Pickleball Club, and fun is synonymous with the wry and witty comedy of Mark Goldberg who took the stage next. Using his unique brand of humor, Mark unleashed a surprise roast of Board Chair for Leagues and Tournaments Gary Ramella, supported by some clever graphics, that had the audience – and Gary – in stitches. Mark's performance has become one of the most anticipated features at these events and he never fails to leave the audience laughing and asking for more.

Remember that 50/50 raffle? The Club grossed over \$1,900.00 dollars thanks to the generosity of its members who bid on four beautifully themed gift baskets. As Janet Ramella called out the winning ticket numbers, Stephanie Horn, Richie

Ragovin, Sylvia “Patty” Smith and Wendy Strauss came forward to claim their gifts. At the end of the night, the net amount donated to the Unicorn Foundation was \$1,500.00. It was a good haul.

The music continued and the dancing was non-stop until the clock struck 10:00 PM. Then, poof... it was over. But is pickleball at Regency really ever over? On November 1, the Club welcomed its newest Board members Meg Pribyl for Events, and Noreen Gumnic for Membership, along with new President Harriet Blumenstock. Harriet has served on the Board as Membership Chair since the Club’s inception in 2022. She helped grow the Club to 322 members in 2025 making her well qualified to lead it over the next two years.

Leaving the Board is Lisa Citron, whose tenure as President will be remembered for her leadership, spirit, and grace, Eva Nyman, whose creative energy fueled the success of the Club’s themed social events, Phyllis Greenberg, who recruited new members and taught novice players basic pickleball skills, and Bobby Harris, whose experience, knowledge, and organizational skills became the blueprint for setting up and running the Club’s league and tournaments.

The contributions made by these four individuals are the underpinnings of the Club’s success which the new Board members can build on. Now bring on 2026!



[Caption]

228 Regency Pickleball Club members and guests partied the night away and made memories as they celebrated the Club’s successful 2025 season. Photo by Meg Pribyl.



[Caption]

Debbie Gabor and Karen Calder brightened up the ballroom as they prepare to sell 50/50 raffle tickets to raise money for the Unicorn Foundation to help families dealing with pediatric cancer.  
Photo by Meg Pribyl.