

Mountains to Molehill: 'In our blood'

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How about a game of shuffleboard? Nah, that's for old people. That was Carolyn Burrell's answer when her husband, Richie, popped the question a few years ago. And she's had to eat her words since retiring from Florida to Hendersonville and earning national recognition for her shuffleboard skills.

"I came up one March from Florida and found the courts, and they took me under their wings," says Mr. Burrell. The couple recently competed in the N.C. State Shuffleboard Tournament, and Mrs. Burrell says she was "lucky enough" to come in first place with her partner, Betty Loveland. "We won some money and got our names on a big trophy," she tells with a grin. Then she partnered with her husband in the national tournament and came in second. But for someone who thought shuffleboard was for old people, Mrs. Burrell says she has discovered a "not so easy" game. "We have people in their 80s and people in their late 50s playing, and I tell you, there's a lot of strategy involved," she says. "No, it's not easy. In 2006 we played in Lakeside, Ohio, in the International Shuffleboard Tournament with players from Germany, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Australia, the United States, Ireland and even a United Nations team, and Richie's team won first place for the Americans, and my women's team won first place for the Americans." Mr. Burrell's shuffleboard experience began in 1997 in DeLand, Fla., and he got his start in Hendersonville in 1999. "Now we're both pros," he says. Mrs. Burrell remembers telling her husband when he returned from his first games in Hendersonville that she wasn't interested in playing "that stupid game old people play." Now, she says, "It's in our blood."

