

*This is the first episode in a potential series of brief profiles on illustrious and/or notable individuals who have been guests at the Norfolk Country Club as golfers, tennis players, Thursday night speakers or socially. Any suggestions for this series by current members would be most welcome. First up:*

## **Vicomtesse de Saint Sauveur (1921 - )**

**Champion French Golfer  
One of First Female Members of St. Andrews, Scotland**



**Picture Perfect Swing, circa 1947**

*"Norfolk is one of my favorite golf courses in the whole world."*

**Vicomtesse de Saint Sauveur**, winner of 14 international golf tournaments, including the *British Ladies Open Championship* in 1950 at Royal County Down, Northern Ireland, always raved about the Norfolk Country Club's charming, unassuming nine-hole golf course tucked away in the foothills of the Berkshires.

Sister of former NCC member, **Alec Vagliano** and aunt of current NCC member, **Justin Vagliano**, Vicomtesse de Saint Sauveur savored every opportunity to play Norfolk when she visited her relatives at Sunset Ridge Farm. Though she played in tournaments all over Europe and beyond, she had a special affinity for Norfolk's short, captivating, challenging course.

Dorothee Vagliano, or **Lally**, (a childhood nickname that stuck) was born in Paris on April 4, 1921 into a prominent golfing family. Her father, **André Marino Vagliano**, won the French Amateur six times starting in 1923; and in 1931 he initiated the first international ladies golf tournament which is still played today - the winner receiving the Vagliano Cup. Vagliano played out of the Fontainebleau Golf Club and in 1931 wrote a book on the history of golf in France.



**French Golf Champion, André Vagliano**

André married an American, **Barbara Gallatin Allen**, at Bolton Priory, Pelham Manor, NY in 1920. They met during World War I in France where they were both awarded the *Croix de Guerre* for bravery and heroism. When André won the French Men's Amateur Championship in 1931, his wife Barbara came in second in the French Women's Amateur Championship.

Lally was a precocious golfer, fierce competitor, and an intimidating, elegant presence on any golf course she played. In 1937, at age 16, she won the British Girl's Championship at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire, England.



**16-Year-Old Lally Vagliano (left) Wins British Girls Championship, 1937**

In 1939, at age 18, Lally married **Jacques Edmond Henri Edouard Vicomte de Rafelis Saint Sauveur**, an officer in the French artillery and a well-known golfer in his own right who was also awarded the *Croix de Guerre*. Lally thereby acquired a noble French title, becoming **Dorothee Rafelis de Saint Sauveur**, the name by which she was known for most of her golf career. (In the 1970s, she remarried, after which she went by the name **Lally Segard**).



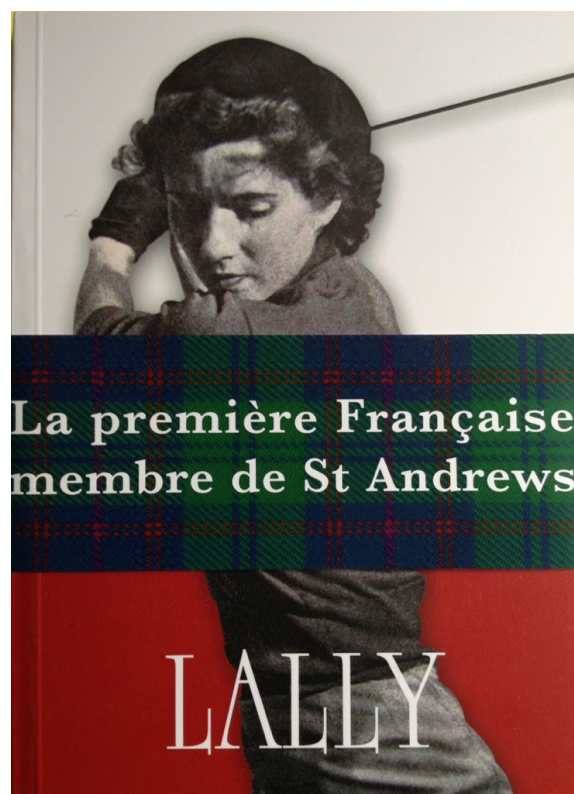
**Vicomtesse and Vicomte Saint Sauveur, 1940s**

Lally went on to win the French Championship in 1948, 1950, 1951 and 1952; the British Championship in 1950 (defeating Jesse Valentine of Scotland, former no. 1 player in the world, 3 and 2); the Italian Championship in 1949, 1950 and 1951; the Swiss Championship in 1949 and 1955; the Spanish Championship in 1951; and the Benelux (Belgian/Netherlands/Luxembourg) Championship in 1953, 1954 and 1955. She also won the French Close Championship eight times; and was twelve-time winner of the French Foursomes. Quite possibly, she is the best French female golfer of all time.

She set course records at Deauville with a 63 and at Morfontaine (her home course) with a 69. She was captain of the French Ladies Team from 1957 to 1974; and was long-time president of the Women's Committee of the World Amateur Golf Council.

Just three years ago in 2015, Lally was one of seven women golfers granted membership in the hallowed Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland. It took 260 years and a begrudging vote of the 2,400 male members to allow Lally, along with such golf legends as Louise Suggs, Annika Sorensen, Laura Davies (and, curiously, non-golfer Princess Anne of Great Britain) to join the world's oldest golf club (1552), the 'home of golf'.

Upon becoming a member of St. Andrews, Lally wrote a book about her long, fulfilling career in golf. Simply titled, '*Lally*,' it is available only in French for those NCC members who may be up to the task of translating it.



Lally still resides in Paris and will be 97 this April. Up until a few years ago, into her 90s, she was still playing a respectable game of golf, walking the course and carrying her own bag. She could be a stickler on the finer points of the game (just ask Justin Vagliano), but her passion for the game always shone through.

Perhaps, every now and then, she reflects, wistfully, on her days playing at the Norfolk Country Club, one of her favorite golf courses in the whole world.

There is little doubt that **Lally Vagliano Segard**, preeminent French Golf Champion, is the best, most accomplished golfer (by a wide margin), male or female, to ever have played the Norfolk Country Club's invitingly beautiful, jewel of a nine-hole course.

*Michael Kelly, Club Historian*

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