

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

A Look Back at the Indian Hill Club – and a Look Ahead...

Ground was broken in late 1957 for the Indian Hill Club, which opened July 1958, so it soon will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Many families had hours of summer fun there over five decades, and the club has provided recreation and social interaction for all.

In 1955 a few residents dreamed of a village swimming pool; and after a survey, they decided and in favor of a nonprofit club instead of a municipal pool. The thirteen founders in 1957 acquired property at 7585 Shawnee Run Rd. and a membership drive ensued. Approximately 150 families paid \$360 that year, and when the pool opened, 255 families were enrolled. By 1959, membership was full at 300, and there was a waiting list. The clubhouse with snack bar opened in 1960, and the freestanding totem pole was erected in 1962. The totem pole was Jim Edwards' idea – it reflected the Native American heritage locally and the name of the community.

In the early years additional property was acquired, and a parking lot, second swimming pool (the lap pool), and two tennis courts were constructed. The Board of Trustees (9 people) had a proactive approach toward new projects with a "Let's do it" philosophy. The upper tennis courts are known as the Wilke Memorial Courts because member Ted Wilke began their excavation even before securing



the entire Board's approval. Additional upgrades included heating the recreational pool and adding tennis courts on the west side of the club, despite problems in a two year construction process. Membership expanded to 375 families.

Swimming was so popular that in 1967 members voted to install the Bubble, a canvas dome that covered the pool, allowing its year-round use. It was three stories high and had a revolving entrance door and fans to circulate air. Fake palm trees were part of the interior design. Staffing it in winter was a problem, attendance lagged, and ice formed outside the dome, causing concern about collapse. After two years, the Bubble was sold, concluding what is referred to as the club's "only fiasco."

The Club adopted a mascot, and the Swim and Dive Teams competed as Wahoos. Initially they were in the Queen City League and traveled as far as Clifton and Oak Hills. Currently they are in the Seven Hills League with clubs of similar size in the

eastern suburbs. There was also highly competitive tennis, both amongst adults in these leagues and between club members.

Located at the end of Dot Lane, the club is situated in a bucolic setting with stately pine trees arching over the entrance. There is a circular drop-off area in front of the clubhouse, which has a registration desk, restrooms/changing rooms, and a snack bar, "the Café." West of the clubhouse are tiers of land with different activities. The L-shaped recreation pool and baby pool are closest to the building. To the south is the six-lane lap pool, and around the perimeter are seven tenniko tennis courts. Members can play volleyball, 4 Square, basketball, or corn hole on the grounds, and a large grill and picnic tables are tucked to the side. For many years the club has been praised for its landscaping. Ray Farnham, an early manager, used to grow glorious roses on the property. Now attractive hanging baskets, flowering shrubs, colorful flower beds, and grassy paths are well maintained on the 11.6 acre site.

The club has expanded its membership to 400, and is welcoming applications. Current plans are to rebuild the dual pools, replace the clubhouse, refresh the tennis courts, and possibly create more parking spaces. Architect member Michael McInturf has been engaged for this project. The goal is to meet the current needs of member families and maintain the charm and environment of the long established Indian Hill Club.

Please contact Indian Hill Club or Indian Hill Historical Society to share memories or photographs.

Thanks to Bob Belliveau, Warren Hinsch, Pat & Dave Lynch, and M.J. McClure for their stories.