

HU Hobbyists
Unlimited

50
Years
1966 - 2016



Hobbyists 50 Years

1 A brief history

2 Activities

3 Hobbyist Activity Days of Early 2016

4 Hobbyist Trips and Tours

5 Hobbyists Demographics

6 Some Thoughts from our Living Past Presidents



As I write this, I am almost halfway through my tenure as President of Hobbyists Unlimited and I continue to be awed and inspired by the dedication and hard work of the officers, activity chairmen and many, many other members that keep this organization running smoothly and efficiently. No wonder it has survived, indeed, thrived, for 50 years.

Yes, 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of Hobbyists Unlimited and my primary objective has been, and will continue to be, to celebrate the occasion in the most memorable and meaningful manner possible and in ways to assure participation of the maximum number of members.

Planning began in May 2015 with the formation of a 50th Anniversary Steering Committee including the following members: Giancarlo Bisone, Joe Burns, Mike Doherty, Bill Carbone, John Pensec, Bob Stevenson, Charlie Tuch and myself. The mission of

the committee was to discuss ideas for celebrating the 50th, decide on priorities, determine a budget for each event and coordinate with the members responsible for those events. Many ideas were considered and in the end 5 were selected as priorities and a budget for each established. These included the following:

1. A significant (\$6,000), one-time donation to our sponsor, and host, since the beginning, the First Presbyterian Church. Joe Burns presented the check to the Pastor on Hobbyist Sunday in November of 2015.

2. The adoption of a special 50th Anniversary logo, designed by Giancarlo Bisone, to be used on the website, correspondence and a commemorative gift that will be given to each Hobbyist.

3. A catered annual picnic to be held in September instead of August, with the hope that the later date might allow more members to attend. Bob Morris, volunteered to head the committee in charge of this event, which is scheduled for September 9th at Graydon Pool.

4. Establishing the October Dinner Dance as a special celebratory event complete with a band and facilities to accommodate many more members. Charlie Tuch and his team have been working very hard to set this up for October 10th.

5. Publication of this anniversary booklet containing articles and photographs telling the story of Hobbyists Unlimited, both past and present, to be distributed to every member. Arne Olsen, Paul Gregg and their team have been working diligently on the articles, while Joe Lebert digitized and collated the slides and photographs that were selected from the archives by Joe Burns, Bob Stevenson and Jim Sutherland and more recent ones collected by Tom Heed. The DVD of these photos was shown at the Fellowship Luncheon and has been used in the selection of the photos included herein.

A 6th special activity was added to the budget in early 2016 at the instigation of Bob Stevenson, Bill Carbone, Jim McKeown and Tony LaFemina, the Hobbyists Follies, which took place on June 9th.

In addition to the above, the activity chairmen were asked to think of something they could do to celebrate the anniversary and encourage participation by as many members as possible. The response has been very positive and to date the following has either taken place or is planned:

The Hospitality Committee provided a huge birthday cake at the January General Meeting and there was another one at the Fellowship Luncheon in April where the DVD mentioned above of over 400 photos dating back to the 1960's was shown.

The Movie Lovers Club has been showing movies all year that were released in 1966 and the Book Club read and discussed "Miracle in Philadelphia", which was published in 1966.

The Hiking Club held an open hiking day for all Hobbyists at the NJ Botanical Gardens and the Tennis Club has offered free instruction and new tennis balls this year for those interested in taking part.

The Music Club meeting in June featured "Songs of Protest" from the 1960's, while the Camera Club will have a special show of Hobbyists' photographs at the Ridgewood Library during the month of October.

The Public Affairs group had a program featuring the debating team from RHS as a first step in developing a closer relationship with the youth of Ridgewood.

In July the Hobbyists were honored guests at the Ridgewood Fourth of July Parade and Celebration and Habitat for Humanity had a Hobbyists Work Day.

Hobbyists Unlimited is a GREAT organization that has for 50 years provided its members with opportunities to participate in a wide array of activities, but, above all, to enjoy the fellowship of friends. This booklet is dedicated to all those friends, past and present, that have kept the spirit alive.

Enjoy.

Jim Sutherland



A brief history

by Arne Olsen

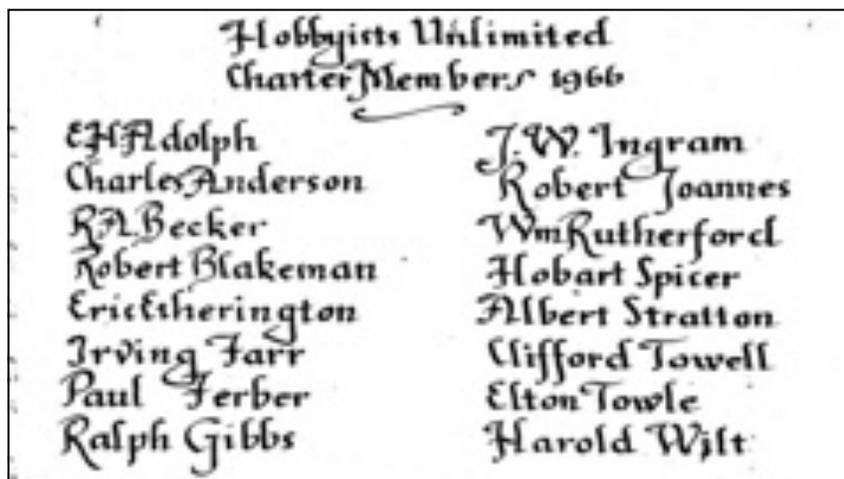
Harold Wilt, the first President and organizer of Hobbyists Unlimited, was often asked what motivated him to start this organization. Wilt replied, “ I spent the first two years of retirement not knowing what to do with myself. After spending a lifetime in the field of industrial advertising, I was confronted with a gigantic boredom problem which I at first felt helpless to solve. I had no hobbies at all when I was working.”

In 1966, he decided to use the organization abilities he had acquired during a business career to start different activities for a group of retired men. There was to be no limit to the number of activities: “Unlimited” referred to any hobby or interest that included a minimum of two persons, and the First Presbyterian Church agreed to provide their facilities for meetings and activities.

The original sixteen charter members were also church members but church membership was not a requirement at that time nor in future years.

Hobbyists Unlimited is identified as a non-profit, non-sectarian organization which cultivates and expands the hobbies of retired men. A Constitution and By-Laws were approved and adopted in 1968 with numerous revisions in the succeeding years.

The most compelling evidence for the success of this organization is the increase in membership in its fifty year history. From its inception with 16 charter members, the membership increased to 294 after nine years in spite of attempts to “cap” the size as it approached the 150 and 250 marks. In 1989 there was a final attempt to stop its growth at 350 but, once again, this was rejected by the membership, as was the boundary requirement for home addresses. Today, over 400 members can participate in over 30 activities including numerous day trips and extended tours.



The remarkable growth in membership over a relatively short time span was not only surprising but also of some concern to its founder, Harold Wilt.



Founders celebrate 9th Anniversary

He expressed some of these feelings in a letter submitted to board members. “When I founded Hobbyists Unlimited eight years ago”, he wrote, “ I envisioned a reasonably compact friendly group of approximately fifty members with everyone on a first-name basis. Now that we have over 200 members I can’t recall even the last names of more than half of us.”

He continued: “The foundation of our group is based on personal friendships among members which must be continually nurtured in all of our Activities in the coming years as this is the key for successful growth in the future”. He would be pleased that his prescription



Passing of the gavel ceremony

for success has been followed during the fifty years of our existence.



Bridge was one of the first activity

The Hobbyist organization enhances the life of a retiree and as the word spread, the waiting lists of those interested in membership grew exponentially. And with new members came new ideas which resulted in greater, more varied activity programs as well as outside speakers at monthly meetings, day trips, extended trips and Dinner Dances.



A continued tradition



Day trips & tours were popular

The most significant improvement, however, was including our wives and friends in all our social activities. If there was any downside to this growth, it was best expressed by one of the old-timers who remarked, “Gosh, there was a time when I knew everyone; now we all have to wear name-tags.”

Increase in size does, however, present a problem in communication. By 1989, 23 years from its beginning, the size of our group had reached close to 350 with a growing list of applicants each month. The obvious answer to keeping the entire membership informed throughout the year was a Newsletter.

The first Newsletter was printed in April, 1989. The initial effort by the Newsletter staff was a four-page document with the title, “Something New(s) From Hobbyists Unlimited.”. The staff in its opening paragraphs acknowledged that “Obviously, it won’t do

to use this title. We need a name and we challenge the creativity of the membership to come up with one.” They asked for some suggestions by the end of the month and were rewarded by 25 titles and variations.

The winning entry, “Hobnobbing with Hobbyists Unlimited,” was submitted by Ron Merck, who explained his choice was based on Webster’s definition of hobnob: “to be on close terms with.” Lew Norris, who had raised over \$1300 for the Red Cross with his swimming exploits, was on the same track with his suggestion, “Hobnob Bulletin.”



Bowling - another early activity

It was decided to print quarterly issues of the Newsletter which provided information submitted by Activities chairmen, introduced new members and the loss of present members, gave biographies of incoming Presidents, updated social activities, including day trips and extended tours, and offered other news of interest to the membership. Most important, every Hobbyist listed in the Roster received the Newsletter through U.S. postal delivery.



Dinner Dances - traditional activity with wives

It is no surprise that the Activities report in the first issue was primarily about golf and bowling. Golf announced that the “automatic concession of putts ‘within the leather’ will be eliminated except for players who have reached double par on a hole.

The next issue of the Newsletter reported that after some protest, the “gimme putts” rule would be decided by each foursome before play but the “gimmies rule” would be followed during tournament play.



Golf attracted a large number of participants

Bowling, which had almost completed its season, focused on team standings and individual awards. It was also reported that existing rules would remain in effect, only pins that were knocked down would count in the scoring ; near misses would not be counted!

The 1990's started with an announcement that dues would be increased to \$25.

The Investment group presented an interesting contest which ended in October, 1990. The challenge: to invest \$100,000 with the objective of achieving the largest capital gain with dividends and interest in a one-year period. The winner had a \$34,000 gain! The results of future contests were always reported in the Newsletter.

The Hobbyists celebrated their 25th anniversary in October, 1991 with a Dinner/Dance at the Fiesta Club with 350 people in attendance.

In the June 1992 meeting, the Hobbyists overwhelmingly voted to abolish the membership cap of 350 to allow the early admission of over 60 men on the waiting list. Previous admission occurred when a member moved or died. To ensure an orderly transition of new members, a max of 12 applicants could be admitted at each monthly meeting.

In 1993 the Activities list continued to increase and information about participants, results of competition and schedules of upcoming events were listed for golf, bowling, investments, bocce, fishing, bridge, chess, computers, hiking, tennis, volunteer services, lively widowers, philately, public affairs and woodworking.

Skiing was in the planning stages; a video club was started in early December.



Bocce in Glen Rock

The Hobbyaires, or as they described themselves, “A Seasoned Musical Group” received recognition in the 1994 Newsletter for their continued service to the community in addition to providing music prior to the monthly meetings. Banjoist Bill Marx started the Hobbyaires in the mid-seventies with three other musicians. As many as 15 musicians made up the group by this time.



Hobbyaires - formed in 1970's by banjoist Bill Marx

Pocket billiards or “pool” was introduced as another Activity in 1995; by the end of the year eight members were “chalking their sticks” ready for play. Two other Activities were also being introduced at this time: poker and walking (as opposed to hiking).



Fishing - we catch them; he cleans them

The year 1996 marked the 30th anniversary of the Hobbyists with celebrations at the “octo luncheon” and the Christmas Dance. When four new members were inducted in November 1996, the membership number finally reached and surpassed the 400 mark with a final total of 401. In addition, there were ten applicants on the waiting list.

There was no Newsletter printed during the year 1997. No explanation was given for this lapse of communication but there may be some connection with the increase of dues that year to \$35.

Two new Activities were added in 1998: Habitat for Humanity, which continues with strong support today, and Rowing, sleek shells on the Passaic River.

It was noted in January 1999 that Hobbyist George White would celebrated his 99th birthday.

Members attending the February meeting in 1999 rejected a resolution that would add only the towns of Allendale, Franklin Lakes, Paramus and Saddle River as eligible for prospective members with a cap of 425 members. It was then affirmed that there would be no geographic boundaries or limits on membership size.

In 2000 the Computer Club noted that 30+ Hobbyists were using e-mail on the internet! It also reported a doubling of members attending meetings to discuss various topics, such as purchasing and operating a computer.

Genealogy also had a resurgence of interest since there were databases now available on the internet to trace family histories.



Hiking in the old days

Crandon Clark chaired a project in 2001 to collate a brief history of all Hobbyists’ wartime and peacetime experiences during the period from World War II through the Korean War. There was an enthusiastic response to this request and the final publication listing 220 Hobbyists was available in December.

During the same year, the Photo/Video Club, chaired by Harry Place, reported that there would be a demonstration of the digital camera - taking photos, uploading to a computer and making instant color prints.

In 2002 another increase in dues to \$40 was approved.



Volunteers stuffing envelopes - 1985

There continued to be an increased interest in computers as described by the 2003 report of the Computer Club. They reminded everyone of their motto, “OLD MEN CAN LEARN NEW TRICKS”.

ROMEIO (Retired Old Men Eating Out) continued their “get-togethers” with larger groups each month.



Computer Club investigates iPads

In 2004 president Bill Comis announced the start of the Hobbyists Unlimited new web site emphasizing “that you do not have to be a computer wiz to view it!”

In 2005, skiing returned with plans for two week trips. Their motto “If you don’t use it you’ll lose it.” Fishing - Salt Water also had plans for the months of April, June - August and September - October.

The Hobbyists took another step into the “digital Age” in 2006 when a request was made for all members with an e-mail address to include this information in the Hobbyists data base. Emails and the website were becoming the major means of communication with most members.

Wine Appreciation Group (WAG) was formed with a similar interest as ROMEIO, but included members who, as they put it, had a “cork sniffing” inclination for wine!”

Meanwhile, Habitat was featured in an article in the October issue of “The Best of Bergen” and in 2007 started a project called “Houses in a Box” for Katrina victims.

That year, the Hobbyists Bowling team continued a rivalry that had started in 1986 with the Activities Unlimited team. The won-lost record at that time was Hobbyists 12, Activities Unlimited 7.



Habitat for Humanity Day

A different first time competitive venue with Activities Unlimited took place in 2008 on the Wallkill golf course. This time AU’s four horsemen, Arthritis, Rheumatism, Incontinence and Impotence scored a decisive 10 -2 match play victory. President Jerry O’Callahan boldly predicted that “Next year will be a much different story” and he isn’t from Brooklyn!

The Camera Club was started in 2009 by Giancarlo Bisone with an agenda of informative lectures, field trips, contests and photo exhibits.

Bisone, the 44th President of the Hobbyists, also provided the expertise to further catapult the organization into the modern age of information. The web site which he improved in 2010 provides instant information about all Hobbyists Activities. In the short time that this service has been available, the number of “visits” has increased to over 4000/month and is still growing.



ROMEIO gathering



Camera Club Members taking portraits

Harry Neumann's 278 game during the 2010 season was the highest recorded score in Hobbyists Bowling league history and this record stood for six years until Gary Don bowled a 286 game.

Meanwhile the Habitat "Greyheads" were recognized by the Bergen County chapter for their long standing commitment to the many Habitat housing projects in which they were involved.

In 2011 the Valentine's Day Dinner/Dance was changed to the Mardi Gras Dinner/Dance with the understanding that members were not "off the hook" for the proper attention of love and affection appropriate for this special day!



Mardi Gras Dinner Dance

Quentin Weist celebrated his 100th birthday in 2012 and the Hobbyists recognized his many achievements with a special tribute attended by Village officials at our monthly meeting.

In 2013, the Hobbyists Picnic was attended by more than 100 people at the Ridgewood Duck Pond.

The same year the Gourmet Cooking Group prepared a menu in celebration of Classic Italian cooking and the Hobbyist Wine Making Group donated several bottles of a recent bottling for the occasion.

Rich Edelman joined the International Habitat team from Paterson for a building project in Nepal in November 2014. He shared his experiences upon his return with a slide show presentation to the membership.



Quentin Weist at 100

Approximately one year later, an earthquake hit Nepal causing devastating damage to building structures with considerable loss of human life. Rich reported that fortunately the Habitat project he worked on escaped with minimal damage. Nepal is still in the process of recovery today.



Camera Club exhibit at the Stable

The Hobbyists joined Jesse Rubenstein in celebration of his 100th birthday at the May monthly meeting in 2015. Centenarian Quentin Weist welcomed Jesse to his exclusive club.



Jesse Rubenstein turns 100 - congratulated by Q. Weist (103)

Our 50th Anniversary year, 2016, is a time to reflect on our history that can best be summarized as a steady increase in membership, active participation in the more than 50 different Activities, a high interest in travel, education and exploration, and leadership which has guided our organization through both internal and eternal challenges.

One final note: In the first year, dues for membership was one dollar. In subsequent years, dues were increased to cover expenses such as printing, mailing and meeting facilities in the church to our present level of \$50 - an increase of one dollar for each year of our existence. Economists might call this "Controlled Inflation."



Picnic at the Duck Pond

Hobbyists Activities over the years

Aid to Charities

Bocce

Book Club

Bowling

Bridge

Camera Club

Chess

Civic Affairs

Computer Club

Dinner Dances

Entertainment

Fishing

Gardening

Genealogy

Golf

Gourmet Cooking

Habitat for Humanity

Hiking

Hobbyists Concerned

Intestments Club

Italian Group

Jazz Bunch

Lively Widower

Lunch Bunch

Membership

Military History

Movie Club

Music Club

Newsletter

Philately

Photography

Photo/Video

Pocket Billiard

Poker

Program

Public Affairs

ROMEIO

Rowing

Science and Technology

Shuffleboard

Skiing

Tennis

Trips & Tours

Volunteer Services

Walking

Wine Appreciation Group

Wine Making

Woodworking

(activity currently inactive)



Hobbyist Activity Days

Early 2016 by Paul Gregg

The table's identity as Table #7 had begun when Dana Feeney, First Presbyterian's administrative manager, had approved the date on the Hobbyists calendar of building-use requests that Rich Edelman, 2nd VP of the organization, had submitted. "April 21st, Parish Hall for the Hobbyists Fellowship Luncheon? Yes on that - great!" she'd said, at her desk checking the lists. That had been four months before.

Late this morning in a span of twenty minutes a crew of five members of the Fellowship Luncheon committee had rolled out, erected, and covered eleven round tables, surrounding each with ten chairs, and at 11:30 Alan Finkelstein had placed a white cardboard number-sign in the center of each. Soon a few Hobbyists were making their way into the room and spreading out in different directions. Most remembered their table assignments from the chart they'd been emailed the day before. At this table John DeSantis was the first to arrive, eyeing the number-sign. "Table 7," he murmured. He pulled out a chair, sat down, and waited.



Fellowship Luncheon - Rich Edelman speaks on Habitat in Nepal

"Morning." A man approached and pulled out a nearby chair. "Table 7? John DeSantis?" He eyed the nametag John had clipped to his lanyard. "Don't know if we've met. Frank Wimer."

"Hi, Frank. John. A pleasure."

"Indeed. Um - aren't you a Hobbyaire? Weren't you playing at a recent membership meeting - six of you, in navy blue sports coats and ties?"

"Right," said John. "Good memory. Good eye. 'Take the A Train,' one of the tunes we played. Did you like it?" The room was fuller now, and three other men were approaching the table.

"Sure," said Frank. "That's an old one. I'm in the Hiking group myself."

"You guys probably repeat some of your favorite routes. How often does your group do a new hike?"



Hiking

"Once in a while. One day back in January eleven of us tried one new for us, the 3.9-mile Doris Day circular loop trail located near Sterling Forest. The morning was sunny but cold. Five men, the flexers, walked the loop in a counter-clockwise direction, while the six regular hikers walked the opposite way, which started a little more steeply, and then met the flexers at the top of the loop before departing for a one-mile out and back along a nearby section of the Appalachian Trail. In the open woods of winter, panoramic vistas and sections of stone stairs for easy walking helped make that an enjoyable trek."

“I remember that morning,” said Ralph Rossi, a man who’d arrived during Frank’s report. “It was 19 degrees at Graydon, one of the coldest mornings of the winter. The Wine Making Club met there too - it happened to be at the same time as you - and we laughed that while you were all going off up north to trek uphill in brutal cold, we were going down to Tinton Falls to rack our 60 gallons of Opus One Blend inside in warmth and comfort.”

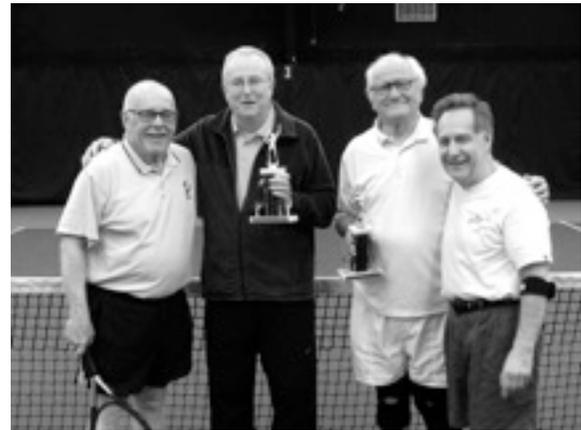


Book Club

“Hiking isn’t always much for me either,” another man, Ed Houlihan, chuckled. “But often I do like Walking. “We walkers worked up a good appetite on the path along the Saddle River this morning, going from the Duck Pond down to Fair Lawn and back. Like we do every week, but this morning the air was clear and fresh.”

By now the table was nearly full. A man who had seated himself next to Frank introduced himself as Rich Conrad, a new Hobbyist, and said he was interested in hiking and also in reading, and then another man, Tom Folger, said, “Let me tell you about our Book Club. The group likes books on topics of U.S. history. Our February book was Chris DeRose’s *The Presidents’ War*, which was about the roles that five ex-Presidents played in President Lincoln’s efforts to preserve the Union and put an end to slavery - Millard Fillmore, James Buchanan, and so on. People tend not to know much about those nineteenth-century Presidents whom history hasn’t rated very highly, and we agreed it was satisfying to learn more about them and in the context of their troubling times. I came away disturbed by John Tyler and Franklin Pierce, and even more impressed by Lincoln.”

Next to him, Ed Houlihan leaned forward. “It’s fascinating history. And Wayne Lemme and I, walking in from the parking lot, were just talking about another war of interest, the Vietnam War, that’s been a recent subject in Military History. Two of the last meetings have focused on the helicopters we used in it - Hueys and Cobras. That war certainly came at a defining time in life for many of us.”



2015 Tennis Finalists

“Sounds interesting indeed,” said Rich. “While getting me and some others on board as a new Hobbyists, Don Togneri of Membership told us about a few of the other activities, including Italian and Tennis. Some guys like Joe Linfante can tell you in perfect Italian what’s been going on in their lives during the week, and in Tennis the captains - Hugh Rodgers and the others--are lining up play for the spring now that May is about here. After a winter of indoor play, with a free clinic and some group lessons, they’ll finally be outdoors--“

He was interrupted by Hobbyist President Jim Sutherland speaking from the microphone in the front of the room to welcome the crowd and to invite Joe Burns to tell about the slide show of fifty years of Hobbyist history that was starting on the screen behind him and that would be continuously playing during the lunch.



Hospitality Committee

Joe spoke of the selection of 50th Anniversary Photos from thousands, many taken from boxes in the church basement and then digitalized, and then arranged, thanks to a few volunteers. Then Dave Smilon, chairman of the lunch, thanked the lunch volunteers and, pulling numbered cards from an envelope he'd just opened, sent the first set of three tables, which happened to include Table 7, to the serving area in the annex to the hall - the area where, at the monthly Membership meetings, Peter Weinstein and others in Hospitality always had coffee ready in the midst of the sign-up tables, and where now there were the tables with the caterer's trays of hot food.



Quentin Wiest bowling

Within a few minutes the ten men of Table 7 were back with loaded plates.

“We were telling Rich of our various club activities,” said Don Hart. “The Habitat for Humanity” group in Paterson has doing indoor work on a one-family house being built in the Fourth Ward on what had been an empty lot. Wednesday we were putting down laminated flooring, and closet poles and shelving went in. Piece by piece, coming together. Living on floors above their garage, the family, yet-to-be selected, will have a nice view of the whole street to look down on from the front and a quiet backyard to look down on from the rear.



Habitat for Humanity

Bergen Habitat has been starting up too, in Bergenfield - Look,” he said, nodding toward a picture on the screen. “There are two Greyheads on a Habitat project. Not sure when or where that was.”

Every few minutes Dave Smilon was sending additional tables of waiting men for their turn at the serving area, and then there was a different interruption from the mike - Rev. Bert Watkins, black jacket and clerical collar, had come into the room, and spoke to the full hall to say how pleased he was to see such a large turnout, and pleased that even on a weekday at noon the church could be put to such a good use. He was given a round of applause, and Jim Sutherland urged him to fill a plate and join the crowd, and Rev. Watkins said he would like to but a parish obligation made him decline.



A Bridge Club session

“You mentioned Wednesday,” said Fred Navas to Don. “Wednesday’s the day I bowl. Bowling’s Session 3 is rolling on with all eighteen of our teams fighting as always for supremacy.”

“Who’s ahead in the wildcard point standings?” asked Tom.

“This week? I’m not sure. The teams knock around in the standings from week to week. Because we on the Pitbulls have been among the top third for much of the session, we’re hoping we can qualify for the playoffs.”

“I hear missing the playoffs isn’t an option in Bocce this spring,” said Ralph. “Dan Eckhardt tells me that everybody who shows up at Wilde Memorial Parke in Glen Rock on a Friday morning is in the playoffs for the day. Their games and number of participants should be up, now that they’re outdoors again.”



ROMEIO at a Chinese restaurant

“Fridays - alternate Fridays - are Poker days for some

of the guys, like Paul Richert at that table behind you,” John DeSantis said. “Conventional play and Texas Hold’em. In Texas Hold’em when they go to championships, they have about a dozen players battling it out. How is it in Bridge, I wonder?”

“Ed Wong was telling me they’re a few weeks into their current round of play. One of their consistent high scorers is a centenarian.”

“Yes. Amazing,” said Bill Carbone, who was passing the table with his plate piled high with lunch and had overheard Ralph’s reply. “Bridge is such a sophisticated game, and Quent is 103. You’ll remember in the winter Newsletter we were able to put in his photo along with Bob Norelli’s tribute to him at a Bowling celebration, a tribute in which Bob enumerated world events that accompanied Quentin Wiest’s birth back in 1912, like the opening of Fenway Park and the sinking of the Titanic.”



Lunch Bunch

Bill moved on and Rich stabbed some sausage and onions onto his plastic fork. “Not a bad lunch. I like this, and the meatballs and the chicken parm.”

“We in this organization like to eat,” said Ed Miller from across the table. “Tomorrow, we ROMEIO men will be at Justin’s in Hawthorne, where the Italian food’s always good. I like looking across the room there at the long mirror where my fellow diners and I are all slowly and quietly eating while engaged in conversation about amazing times, past and present. Robert Sayegh was telling me that the other Sunday the Lunch Brunch was at Primo Amore, also in Hawthorne. And the Lively Widowers - men like Dennis Schoen at Table 8 behind you - had their monthly meeting at Caputo’s yesterday afternoon. You guys in Wine Appreciation - “now he was looking up at a man passing the table on his way back to the

steering area to refill his plate--“Steve, get coffee. Coffee. There’s no good wine up there. In fact, there’s no wine at all. Steve, how did you WAG members like the Village Green in Ridgewood in February?”



RHS Chorus at December 2011 General Meeting

“Another great event,” Steve Rubin had stopped to answer. “We had an Andrea Casalini Treviso Brut Prosecco NV with a Wagyu Beef Carpaccio appetizer. Outstanding! Then a delicious 2012 Jean Paul Picard Sancerre, a Barry Luter selection, with the slow-baked Atlantic salmon. A perfect pairing. And we enjoyed a single vineyard Felsina Berardenga Rancia Chianti Classico Riserva 2006 with the compressed boneless short rib, our second entrée. We finished with flourless chocolate truffle cake.” He moved on with his empty plate.

“Some of us who are also true epicureans,” said Joe Augustine, a man at neighboring Table 6 who was stooping to pick a fallen roll off the floor and had been overhearing, “like to make our own specialized cuisine, each practicing a dish until it is perfect. Our dinner in mid-June at my home will be of French food, and each member’s contribution - escargot, coquille Saint Jacques, and much more--promises to be an exquisite complement to the others. I’m talking about us men in Gourmet Cooking - Here, Hank,” he said to a man moving past the table on the way to the serving area, “throw this away back there, will you?” He handed him the roll, which he’d put in a napkin.

A distant voice from the direction of Table 4, off behind Table 7, could be heard grumbling. “I can’t believe our table still hasn’t been called up yet to go up and serve ourselves. I was at the last table last year, too.”



Trip to West Point

Chirps suddenly sounded, and a man back at neighboring Table 6 and sitting next to Hobbyist Secretary Joe Shannon fished a cell phone out of his pants pocket and checked the screen. “My wife,” Hugh Tuomey could be heard explaining to his table. “I need to pick up a grandchild at three.”

“Hugh, will you and your wife be with us for the tour of the Armory and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in May?” Eli Bordowitz was passing between the tables and had noticed Hugh responding to his phone.

“We plan to,” Hugh smiled. “Wasn’t West Point great--the flags in the Cadet Chapel, the weapons on display in the Museum, Trophy Point? And in April the Orchid Show at the Botanical Garden? The Day Trips are always good.”

“My wife Frankie and I missed West Point. But we are really looking forward to the next of the Extended Tours, Arizona and the Grand Canyon. We’re wondering if the El Nino rains will make for some spring green in the Canyon this year. We would have liked to do the Canadian Rockies trip too, but the dates won’t work for us.”



Trip to Mt. Rushmore

“Whether there’s green in the Canyon or not, you should have opportunity not only for strolling along the South Rim with great vistas changing in the light before you,” said Mel Flanzman, coming up behind Eli, “but also for taking some great photos to bring home. One of the delights for me each year is looking through the images in the Camera Club’s contest to see shots from people’s travels around the world - a green hummingbird before red blossoms, rays of dawn sunlight behind an island, statues in a fountain, tourists in a square beneath colorful balloons. And from around here too. We had wonderful submissions this year. And 73 of them.”



Camera Club Exhibition at the Stable

“Tough to vote for only two,” George Giaquinto at Table 6 agreed. “Nice they’re all going into the display at Lester Stables next month. My own trip into scenic country this spring will be with the guys going to Atlantic City in May for our Golf tournament. We leave the morning after the Spring Dinner/Dance - a Hawaiian luau theme this year, Ed Daly said - so I may still have on my aloha shirt when I’m out on the nice green fairway in balmy offshore

breezes lining up my first shot, the casino skyline in the distance. We golfing guys are eager to make long drives in open country after a winter of endless confinement to the Paramus Players Club.”

“Golf does appeal to many of our members,” Mel agreed. “But there are also adventures waiting to be had in a Fishing trip for fluke with Bob Morris in June, and perhaps in a new Bicycling club that Arthur Wrubel wants to form.”



Follies rehearsal

At Table 7 John Picarelli had gone for dessert and was back working on his plate of cake when over from another table Bob Stevenson approached him. “Hey, John, did you and Joan enjoy yourselves at the Pee Wee Russell Memorial Stump, our latest Jazz Bunch venture? Fun, wasn’t it? Four jazz swing bands and they were all good. Well, I saw you cutting the rug out there on the floor, and I want to remind you it’s still not too late for you to join us in the Hobbyists Follies. Our first rehearsal is in a week or two.”

John looked up but didn’t answer right away, and Bob went on. “Your chance at immortality in Hobbyists history. Did you see Cocoon with Roger DuBroff and the others at Movie Lovers? Your choice of immortality like the choice the characters in that movie had near the end. You could Dance, and if you can sing like Paul Robeson“

“You might talk to Walter Perog,” said John. “He was likely among the regulars at that Music Lovers program, and at the one on Schubert’s “Winterreise,” too. Maybe he can sing--I certainly can’t sing like Paul Robeson.”

“Well, no need to equal Paul Robeson. Think about it.” Bob moved on.

Ed Miller and Fred Navas had finished eating and had left table 7. Dom Casulli, coming up with his cup of coffee, sat himself in the now-empty chair next to John DeSantis, and as he did his eye caught the picture on the screen. “Ha!” he said, “Look at that!” On a slide a golfer in yellow plaid pants appeared to be losing his balance on the crest of a sand trap. Several men chuckled.

The image held for a moment and was succeeded by a shot of a white-haired couple on a Dance floor who appeared to have opposing degrees of success at managing a tango move, and then by a shot of a group of men and women not far from three buffalo in what was probably Yellowstone.

“I’m enjoying these 50th-anniversary activities,” Dom said to John DeSantis. “These slides. And then we have the Follies - that’s going to be fun. Nineteen songs! And also coming up we’ve got the picnic and the dinner-Dance. A special newsletter of our history, some commemorative items like T-shirts and a banner, and over the year most of the groups are doing something connected to 1966 or to the number 50. The 50th Anniversary Steering Committee and the Executive Board - Charlie Tuch, Giancarlo Bisone, and the others--have been doing a great job.”

“Great year to be a member,” John agreed.



Luau Dinner Dance

Bill Crosby arrived and sat in the empty chair next to Dom. “Nice luncheon,” he said. “Though I miss the jokes we had at the St. Patrick’s Day Lunch. Did you hear the one about the leprechaun with big hands?”

Men from other tables were passing with cake and coffee, and Bill noticed Alan Stein. “Hi, Alan. You’ve been busy lately with your new position. On the same

day recently we got from you two emails of services information for departed members.”

Alan stopped and smiled. “We do our best, at Hobbyists Concerned, to keep members--and widows - informed of the illnesses and passings among us, so that people can respond appropriately. It’s a job my predecessor, Jim Feeney, did very well. Yes, we’ve lost a few members lately, but at the same time, we gain new men, like Rich Conrad here.”



2014 St. Patrick’s Day Luncheon

Rich smiled.

“You’re doing a fine job, Alan,” Tom Folger said.

Alan moved off, and Ed Houlihan spotted Dave Smilon approaching behind him. “Hi, Dave. How heavy are those Sunday papers getting that you Volunteer Services men deliver to the patients at Valley Hospital?”

“Pretty heavy, Ed,” Dave said. “There’s a lot in the news these days - a crazy primary election season, Scalia’s death, the government’s effort to unlock that Apple phone, a volatile stock market - “



2015 Picnic

“Speaking of the stock market, maybe we could get our Treasurer John Pensec to invest our interest earnings - what was it for February? \$3.47? Dick Spalckhaver went to the Investors Club meeting on the challenges for capital markets and may have some ideas...”

Dave smiled and moved on.

“This is certainly a good year of topics for Public Affairs,” Dom said. “Terry Lynch said the Ridgewood High School debaters last week were outstanding, on the benefits and harms of domestic surveillance by the NSA.”

“And there are some fine Ted Talks coming from different fields,” Ralph put in. “Ed Lundell was at Science and Technology where they showed a Ted Talk video, “The Line Between Life and Not Life,” by Martin Hanczyc, and said it was fascinating. Science and Technology has decided to try combining its meetings with those of the Computer Club, to see

how it goes. We heard about Windows 10 at that same meeting.”

“We all appreciate the projections on the screen that John Workstus and the computer guys do to facilitate our meetings,” said Frank. “And today’s slides have been great.”

While he was speaking, the sequence of slides stopped and the screen turned empty. The luncheon looked to be about over.

First VP Syd Robertson was at the mike in the front of the room. “Could I have everyone’s attention?” Syd asked. “We hope everyone enjoyed both today’s lunch and the pictures we’ve been looking at while eating. Fifty years have left us a tremendous collection of photos, from the days when members typically wore jackets and ties to meetings and outings, right up to today, and we thank Joe Burns and Joe LeBert especially for making this display possible. None of us has been a member for the full fifty years, but for however long we’ve been here and however active we’ve been, the hobbies and the fellowship have for each of us become a part of what we are.”

Disclaimer: While an attempt has been made to glimpse into goings-on that actually occurred across Hobbyist activities in the early months of 2016, in the narration of the luncheon itself all surface action, including direct and indirect speech, by individuals identified by name is not factual reporting but fiction, intended respectfully.



‘50s - ‘60s Dinner Dance

Hobbyist Trips & Tours

Shortly after Hobbyists Unlimited established a foundation for organization via a Constitution with by-laws and a variety of Activities determined by the interests of the membership, it focused its attention on local trips which provided a venue for both greater understanding of history, social and economic achievement and, perhaps most important, entertainment. The first day Trip was a visit to West Point, followed by trips to industrial sites, museums, Broadway and local theatre and baseball games. Five years after the West Point trip, over 30 day trips were posted in the archives.

One of the most significant events in our History occurred on October 1st, 1970 when the Hobbyists invited their wives and friends to join them in a Matinee Performance at the Playhouse on the Mall followed by dinner at the Ramsey Golf & Country Club. This was referred to as “Ladies Day” and was repeated a year later with the same venue. Later, as we all know, this policy was expanded to all trips, extended tours and many Activity meetings.

The first extended tour (five or more days) took place in 1975 when the Hobbyists, with their wives (or guests), toured the Pennsylvania Dutch country. From that beginning, extended tours expanded to include both US and international sites. The following list summarizes the 50 year history of Hobbyist extended travel.*

** Thanks to Ray Cheesman for his assistance in compiling this information*

Extended Tours over the Years

1975	Pennsylvania Dutch Country	1997	Canary Islands, Mediterranean Cruise, Bermuda, Booth Bay Harbor,
1977	Vermont		
1978	Bermuda, Nova Scotia	1998	Oregon, Branson/Ozarks
1982	Bermuda, New Orleans, Scandinavia	1999	Sicily, Italy
1983	Caribbean, British Isles	2000	Panama Canal, South Dakota
1984	Mediterranean, Greek Islands	2001	Washington DC, Baltimore, Annapolis, New Mexico
1985	Mexico, Holland, Germany	2002	Great Rivers of Europe, Utah
1986	Bermuda, Panama Canal, Italy, Switzerland, Vancouver, Tampa	2003	Paris/Normandy, Seine River, Williamsburg, Gettysburg, Monticello
1987	Canadian Rockies	2004	Bermuda, Las Vegas, Lake Mead/Valley of Fire
1988	Canada - New England Cruise	2005	Washington DC, Canadian Rockies, Mediterranean Cruise
1989	Portugal		
1991	Yugoslavia	2006	New Orleans, Chicago, Milwaukee
1992	Caribbean, Panama Canal	2007	Rhine, Mosel, Switzerland, Belgium, Branson, MO
1993	SunValley, Idaho, Bermuda		
1994	New Orleans	2008	Queen Mary 2 / Caribbean, Sicily, Amalfi Coast
1995	National Parks, Switzerland, Caribbean		
1996	Ireland, British Isles		

Extended Tours over the Years

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 2009 | Paris, Loire Valley, Normandy, Quebec, New England, Panama Canal | 2013 | Ireland, Newport RI, Columbia Snake River |
| 2010 | Bermuda, Scandinavian Capitals, Russia, London | 2014 | Paris, Nice, Mt Rushmore |
| 2011 | Military Tattoo/Norfolk, Spain, Portugal | 2015 | New Orleans, Alabama, Mississippi, England, Scotland, Wales, Chicago |
| 2012 | Great Rivers/Europe, Yellowstone National Park | 2016 | Arizona, Grand Canyon, Canadian Rockies, Eastern Europe, Gettysburg |



Columbia River Cruise - 2013



France - 2014



Trip to Newport - 2013



France - 2014

Hobbyists Demographics

Decade Born	Most Common First Name	Most Common Wife's Name	Residence
1910-1919 4	John - 38	Joan - 20	Ridgewood - 151
1920-1929 70	Bob - 27	Mary - 18	Mahwah - 25
1930-1939 196	Bill - 26	Ann - 16	Glen Rock - 19
1940-1949 140			
1950-1960 8			
Oldest Born 1912			
Youngest Born 1958			

Hobbyists Residence Locations (Other than Ridgewood)

Airmont, NY	Hillsdale, NJ	Pompton Plains, NJ
Allendale, NJ	Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ	Ramsey, NJ
Bloomington, NJ	Lodi, NJ	River Edge, NJ
Butler, NJ	Mahwah, NJ	Rivervale, NJ
Cornwall, NY	Mattapoisett, MA	Saddle Brook, NJ
Cranberry, NJ	Mendham, NJ	Saddle River, NJ
DelRay Beach, FL	Midland Park, NJ	Secaucus, NJ
Denver, CO	Montebello, NY	Suffern, NY
Dumont, NJ	Montvale, NJ	Teaneck, NJ
Elmwood Park, NJ	Myrtle Beach, SC	Upper Saddle River, NJ
Emerson, NJ	Nanuet, NY	West Harrison,
Fair Lawn, NJ	New City, NY	Waldwick, NJ
Franklin Lakes, NJ	New Milford, NJ	Washington, DC
Glen Rock, NJ	Norfolk, MA	Washington Twp, NJ
Green Pond, NJ	North Haledon, NJ	Wayne, NJ
Hackensack, NJ	Oakland, NJ	West Milford, NJ
Harrington Park, NJ	Old Tappan, NY	Westfield, NJ
Havre de Grace, MD	Oradell, NJ	Westwood, NJ
Haworth, NJ	Paramus, NJ	Woodcliff Lake, NJ
Hawthorne, NJ	Park Ridge, NJ	Woodstock, NY
Hewitt, NJ	Pinehurst, NC	Wyckoff, NJ

Thanks to Steve Hochman for compiling this list from the Hobbyists Roster

Past Presidents' Thoughts

We asked the living past Presidents to include a narrative document where each could share their experiences and thoughts during their tenure as President. Each individual has provided the leadership which has resulted in a steady course of progress throughout the history of this organization.

Included in the following list is a response by Lou Van Lentin (1989) who wrote his remarks on December 3, 2009. It was intended to be read at the general meeting of that year but was received too late. Lou died on December 15, 2009. We feel his remarks are most appropriate for inclusion in this list.

Lou Van Lentin - 1989

My membership in the Hobbyists goes back 29 years. The Hobbyist Unlimited men's group is the most wonderful men's group that you will find anywhere. Since my retirement, with the exception of the church, the Hobbyists has had the greatest influence on my wife's and my life.

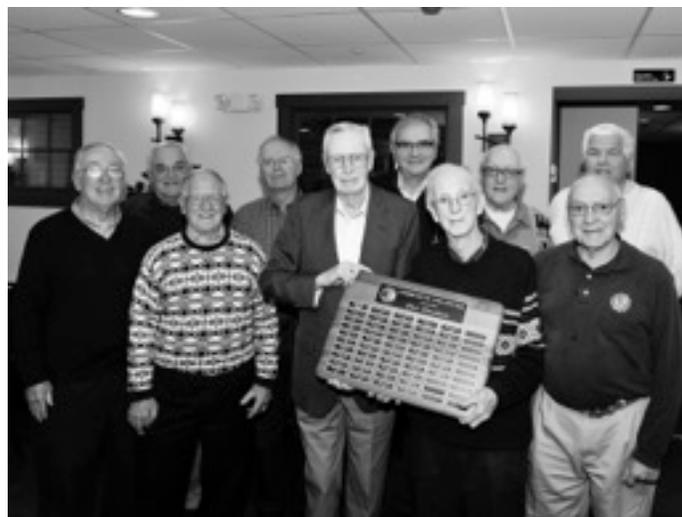
My participation has opened associations with men with whom I never would have had contact. Through Trips and Tours we traveled, interstate and internationally, and enjoyed many cruises. All with the security and experience of the group.

I chaired the Investment Group for seven years and I learned more than I taught. Most of my investing was, and is, using information I gained from men with outstanding careers. The Computer Group set me up and continued to coach me on its use. Without the Hobbyists there would be no opportunity of knowing or working with these accomplished men.

My recent illness has demonstrated to me the genuine and sincere concerns of our membership for each other. Visits, cards and follow-up of my status have been heart-warming. May I express my sincere appreciation to all of you.

My reason for speaking at this time is to remind all to stop and think about what we have in our Hobbyists Unlimited group. Political subjects and advertising are Constitutionally banned. There is nothing else like it. Treat it carefully and make no change that has not been carefully and thoughtfully discussed. Our group consists of retired men preserving their interests and associations. Keep it that way!

My best wishes for a strong viable group for many years in the future.



Past Presidents' Thoughts

Frank Healey - 1996



The year 1996 ran smoothly for the Hobbyists. I was fortunate to have the wise counsel of two capable vice-presidents, Tom Hand and Bob Stone and secretary Bob James, and we were able to resolve any issues at our luncheon meetings at Nellie's Restaurant.

One of the pleasures of participating in the group's activities is getting to know other members. While it is now almost twenty years ago I still remember the 1996 tour of the National Parks as a most enjoyable trip with a fun group of fellow Hobbyists and their wives. The trips, tours and Dances give our wives a chance to take part and meet other couples.

The Hobbyists Activities are the life-blood of the organization and over the years have been led by able and conscientious chairmen. I would urge all members to join activities they have an interest in. Not only do they give you a reason to get out of the house, they can exercise your body and/or stimulate your brain.

The Hobbyists is a great organization and has prospered in the last fifty years. I am proud to be a part of it.

John Gilpatrick - 2001



When the Hobbyists contacted me to ask if I would be interested in being President explaining that this was a one time opportunity to take the office without spending a year as 1st VP. The former 1st VP had died during his term so I would be the only President in recent history who would not have to pass through two staff positions before taking office .

My time as President was less demanding than it is today because we had fewer Activities and were not on the internet.

One of the Activities which I promoted and participated in was Chess. This group had six to eight players initially but over time only two players remained when it ended.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Bill Comis - 2004



I wish to share the joy and pride I had as my privilege to have been President of the Hobbyists. Some highlights of my tenure are:

Starting the general meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

The opening of a Hobbyists website (which was not much compared to our present site but a great step forward).

The start of a President's column in the Newsletter.

A combined April general meeting and Fellowship Luncheon attended by 192 members.

Investing our cash account in a ladder of CD's (in the days of real interest rates).

All of these would not of occurred if not for the Hobbyists who contributed their time and talents. My best memories are of the willingness of Hobbyists to respond to any need and their concern for each other.

Bob Paoli - 2006



I joined the Hobbyists-Unlimited in December, 1995 and became involved with the organization right away. The men's group was right up my alley as they say. Although I had no particular skills or hobbies, the organization enabled me to meet and exchange ideas ,topics and meet other members and make new friends. Since I was only 61 years old and retired my wife was delighted I had a home away from home. Walking, Hiking, Tennis and Bowling were the main activities I enjoyed.

Being Chairman of Trips and Tours for 12 years was an absolute joy for me. It was a pleasure for me to bring enjoyment, fun and educational stimulation to the group. The 4 dinner Dances, where I introduced musician Peter Lieberman, and the Fellowship Luncheon were also events the membership enjoyed. I am proud to say the 18 members I sponsored have all contributed

and became involved in various activities.

Let me congratulate Bob Morris (one of my candidates) who eventually became President in 2007. Thank God and Harold Wilt for having the good sense, wherewithal and energy to initiate and begin Hobbyists Unlimited in 1966.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Bob Morris - 2007



My tenure as President was fairly uneventful. There were the usual wakes and funerals to attend - I believe there were 14. The only item of note, was I initiated the last major revision of the Hobbyists Constitution. This required meeting with the Executive Board over a period of months to draft, rewrite and finalize the updated Constitution. Following the "Roberts Rule of Laws" it was then presented to the membership for approval. All in all, it took about six months to accomplish.

Jerry O'Callahan - 2008



I became a Hobbyists in April, 1999. The Hobbyists group afforded me the opportunity to meet a new family of people and I use the word family because that is what the Hobbyists were to me. I jumped right in by participating in Golf, Tennis, Bowling, Hiking, Pool and the Computer club and never missed a monthly meeting. In 2008 I had the awesome experience of becoming President of the Hobbyists. I helped to establish the program for printing individual pictures of the members so that everyone would be able to identify the members. I also introduced the telephone communication for those members that did not have a computer or e-mail.

Unfortunately I left the Hobbyists in 2015 and moved to the Jersey Shore but I still keep in touch with several members and also visit the website. I miss the camaraderie and am looking forward to attending the upcoming Gala

Anniversary Dinner Dance.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Bill Carbone - 2009



As a teacher, coach and Village volunteer, I have been involved with many organizations. The Hobbyists, however, has that “something special” that’s not found within most groups. We kid about “fellowship and camaraderie” among the members, but these characteristics are the backbone of the group. The sharing, help, and assistance between and among the men is something special.

The idea of people, and in this case men, socializing with each other has some very interesting ramifications. Researchers have paid attention to the importance of friendship and social networks in overall health. Studies have found that older people with a large circle of friends were 22 percent less likely to die during the study period than those with fewer friends.

Other researchers showed strong social ties could promote brain health as we age. Their results showed that people with the highest level of social integration had less than half the decline in their cognitive function of the least socially active subjects. And, one study has shown, “Friendship has a bigger impact on our psychological well-being than family relationships.”

“People with stronger friendship networks feel like there is someone they can turn to,” said the director of the center for gerontology at Virginia Tech. “Friendship is an undervalued asset.”

Even The Bible gives us some indication of this. Genesis 5 tells us that Methuselah lived until he was 969 years old. I’d like to think that it had something to do with him being a member of a Hobbyist-like organization.

John Butler - 2010



There are three highlights I recall as my term as Hobbyists President:

First, I was able to keep my campaign pledge not to raise dues, an action that was warmly received.

The second annual Hobbyist Picnic, which I had initiated in 2009 as First Vice President was moved from the original Graydon Pool site to the Wild Duck Pond. The reason for the move was to save on expenses since Graydon Pool charged for non-residents who attended the first picnic. This policy stayed in force until 2015 when Roberta Sonenfeld, Ridgewood Village Manager, with the prompting of Council Woman, Gwen Hauck, waived all fees for the day.

For the President's Luncheon for activity chairs I chose the Brick House which Bill Carbone had set up the prior year at a reasonable rate in an upscale facility.

Also, I instigated the production of special badges to recognize activity chairs who had served 10 years or longer: Phil Sileo, Poker - Don Ladd, Public Affairs - Dick Ramage, Volunteer Services - Bob Paoli, Trips and Tours - Rollie Williams , Roster

All in all it was good year. I do not recall there was a need to replace any Activity chairmen.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Bob Norelli - 2011



First let me say how proud and grateful I am for the trust and confidence placed in me when I was elected as President of the Hobbyists Unlimited for 2011.

Knowing that success is founded on the principles of partnership and responsibility, principles both of which are deeply imbedded in the membership, I felt very comfortable accepting the position.

Communications with such a large group is a problem. We instituted a new program , " CONTACT US". Members could e mail the President with concerns, suggestions, comments etc. and they would get a timely response. Many responses were reviewed at our board meeting.

We discontinued rental of the church copier and the info required was added to the website. We continued to move all information to the website and significantly reduced our printing budget. Kudos to the individuals who have made our website what it is today.

We reduced administrative costs in collecting dues by eliminating sending pre stamped envelopes to all members. Instead dues would be collected at the October, November and December meetings.

I submitted to the board for its consideration, duties to be added to the job descriptions of the First and Second Vice presidents. They were reviewed and approved. One of the duties now assigned to the Second VP is the maintenance of the Master Calendar for Events and Activities.

At this time our membership was 426 and continued growth was on the horizon. With this, space for meetings and parking loomed as problems. We initiated studies on both of these problems. This included looking at new space, working with Ridgewood's plan for an expanded senior center, etc. While some relief was obtained neither of these problems were totally resolved during 2011.

We did take orders for shirts and caps and this is an ongoing program.

During my term as President I agreed to be part of a study on "Senior Living In Bergen County" being conducted by Bergen Community College. Being a member of the Hobbyists I was able to draw on valuable experience, cooperation and knowledge of our members.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity given to me to serve as President of the Hobbyists. It continues to be a most delightful part of my retirement.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Giancarlo Bisone - 2012



When I accepted the gavel to be the Hobbyists Unlimited President for 2012, I was both humbled by the trust the organization had put in me and a bit anxious about what the Presidency would entail. In retrospect, I had to say that being President of this great organization was the easiest job I had in all of my life. The reason is that the unsung heroes of the Hobbyists are not the President or the Officers, but the various Club chairmen that on a daily basis are working behind the scenes to make this organization work for the benefit of all members.

My role as President was simply to manage the monthly meetings and, when needed, the Executive Board Meetings. In retrospect very little to be anxious about.

I still remember everyone making fun of my accent when I opened every General Business Meeting with a slide or two about "Italian for Hobbyists" and my acceptance speech made in Italian and "translated" into English by the then 1st Vice President, Mike Doherty.

I shall say that the one aspect of my role that I did not like at all was attending the funerals and memorials for deceased Members - not for the function itself, but for the anguish and sorrow to lose good friends and fellows. However, while listening to the eulogy of my dear friend and fellow hiker, Dan Griffin, I made one of his profound thoughts mine. "At the end of the day, you must only worry about things you can control."

When my one year term was completed, I was simply very happy to see that the Hobbyists Unlimited organization was stronger than ever.

Mike Doherty - 2013



I was president for the 45th year of the Hobbyists organization. The theme of my presidency was for members to try at least one new Hobbyists activity they had never been involved with before. I was very gratified by the number of members who accepted the challenge and shared with me their positive experiences.

During my tenure there were two significant accomplishments. The first was the implementation the new member ID's. We eliminated maintaining all member ID's at the church and replaced it with wallet size cards that each member retains and can be used at any Hobbyists event.

The second was the resolution with the church concerning our parking problem at the Church. This was accomplished through a combination of rescheduling some meetings later in the day after the Nursery school closed and getting the Church to begin towing illegally parked cars in the Church lot.

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Bob Stevenson-2014



My experience with the Hobbyists since I joined in 2004 has made my retirement life one filled with positive and satisfying relationships with a great group of men from diverse backgrounds and talents. As an initial entrée in the Hobbyist organization, I served for several years as the Hobbyist Auditor which provided me valuable insights to their varied activities and the great work, behind the scenes, by our dedicated Treasurer, John Pensec.

As I worked up the chairs, I was able to initiate the first membership wide computer survey of their interests and opinions on numerous subjects. This survey culminated in two major outcomes - more morning general meetings and the successful introduction of Seasons as the venue for our dinner Dances.

I was part of a group including Ed Collins and Warren Boroson in organizing the Wine Appreciation Group (WAG) which has expanded my appreciation for

good food and wine and fine Bergen County restaurants. As a byproduct, it provided me with a captive audience for my jokes - good or bad!

I chaired thirteen Hobbyists dinner Dances with our departed member and friend, Fred Schwecke. This effort expanded my acquaintances with many members and especially remembering the names of their spouses. As I saw it, running the Dances was tantamount to hosting a wedding and the various aspects, without having to absorb the financial pain. As a father of four sons, I was quite experienced in rehearsal dinners but not the full wedding commitment

As I left office in 2015 and moved on to the Executive Board, I continue to be impressed with the quality and leadership exhibited by prior Presidents and the Activity Chairmen. As we celebrate our fifty years as an organization, I fondly recall those members who have gone before us and left lasting memories of their friendship and contributions which have made our organization as unique as a support group for our retirement lives. As the Hobbyists Follies highlighted this year: "Do Something" and get involved in some activity and/or leadership position. We need you!

Past Presidents' Thoughts

Joe Burns - 2015



I had the pleasure of serving as the Hobbyist's 47th President. All the activities that were in place at the beginning of the year were still in place at the end. Sadly several members (Joe LeMay, Gary Borchers, Fred Schewecke, and Bernie Cohen) key to the functioning of some of the activities passed away during the year. Typically for the Hobbyists other members stepped up to help keep those activities running smoothly.

In preparation for our club's upcoming 50th Anniversary, in 2016, we began planning events and enhancements to activities that would contribute to the enjoyment members feel from being Hobbyists. An Anniversary Committee was formed and was hard at work as the penultimate year came to an end. There is every reason to believe that 2016 is going to be an even more interesting and fun year for Hobbyists.

Another important part of the anniversary year planning was bringing into clear focus an idea that had been jelling for a couple of years. The Hobbyists have enjoyed almost 50 years of strong, and warm, relationships with its sponsor, the First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood. We believed that it would be appropriate for the club to do something for the church to show our appreciation. We worked closely with the church's long time representative on the Hobbyists Executive Board, Lou Maffei, a Hobbyists and member of the church, to identify the form of the donation. We became very familiar with the facilities issues the church was having. After serious deliberation the Hobbyist Board determined that an additional, one-time financial donation during this year would be the best thing the club could do for it. On Hobbyist Sunday I presented the check to Bert Watkins, the church's minister.

Another really important effort we made this year was to reconnect with the church's management. Two of the three people from the church whom we regularly dealt with were no longer in place - one had passed away, and one retired. The church had reorganized its management. The new heads of their key committees knew next to nothing about the Hobbyists. The Hobbyists are a major user of church facilities, with the attendant costs that go along with that use. We initiated several meetings with their finance committee to orient them about what the Hobbyists do. We also met several times with the minister to explore ways the club could be more visible to the church's members. Some "behind the scenes" efforts have been developed. Also, we are welcoming to our Board Lew Dickinson. Lew, a member of the church and long-time Hobbyist, will be the church's representative to the club. Lew replaces Lou Maffei who is "retiring" from his role as church rep. We thank him for his many years of fairly representing our needs to the church and representing theirs to us. It was a busy, and very interesting year.

Past Presidents

1966 Harold Wilt (Founder)	1983 Ray Whelan	2000 Mac Sayers
1967 Harold Wilt	1984 Don Stephenson	2001 John Gilpatrick
1968 Harold Wilt	1985 Vic Thaller	2002 Phil Engel
1969 Harold Wilt	1986 Walter (Bud) Wehrell	2003 Don Ladd
1970 Henry De Witt	1987 Russ Wollemann	2004 Bill Comis
1971 Bart Bartlett	1988 Furman Stanley	2005 Don Galletly
1972 Jim Moore	1989 Lou Van Lenten	2006 Bob Paoli
1973 Don Calder	1990 Herb Asdal	2007 Bob Morris
1974 Bill Bankaup	1991 Jon Harvey	2008 Jerry O'Callahan
1975 King Kerr	1992 Bill Ashe	2009 Bill Carbone
1976 Bill Paulison	1993 Earle Barker	2010 John Butler
1977 Walker Armington	1994 Bob Munschauer	2011 Bob Norelli
1978 Jack Wilcox	1995 Bert Madison	2012 Giancarlo Bisone
1979 Frank McGuiness	1996 Frank Healey	2013 Mike Doherty
1980 Lipton Bowen	1997 Tom Hand	2014 Bob Stevenson
1981 George Jacques	1998 Bob Stone	2015 Joe Burns
1982 Fred Smedley	1999 Hal Golle	

2016 Officers

President	Jim Sutherland
1st Vice President	Syd Robertson
2nd Vice President	Rich Edelman
Treasurer	John Pensec
Secretary	Joe Shannon
Sponsor's Rep.	Lewis Dickinson

2016 Board Members

Executive Board:	Current Officers plus Giancarlo Bisone, Joe Burns, Mike Doherty, Bob Stevenson
Senior Advisory Board:	Bill Ashe, John Butler, Bill Carbone, John Gilpatrick, Frank Healey, Bob Morris, Bob Norelli, Bob Paoli and Bob Stone.
Auditor:	Bob Cestola

