

## Hobbyists Unlimited Annual Report - 2016

2016 was an outstanding year for the Hobbyists Unlimited organization as we celebrated our 50th Anniversary with the following special events and activities:

1. A donation of \$6,000, presented during last year's Hobbyists Sunday to our sponsor, the First Presbyterian Church.
2. A dinner/dance in October with a band and 358 Hobbyists and their spouses in attendance.
3. A picnic in September attended by almost 225 Hobbyists and their spouses.
4. The publication of a booklet for each member describing the history of the organization and current activities with photographs from 1966 to the present.
5. Two photography exhibitions by members; one at the Stable and the other at Ridgewood Library.

In addition, we were honored as special guests in the Ridgewood 4th of July Parade.

These events, and indeed the whole year, were successful because of the efforts of a great many members, especially the Activities Chairmen. However, the following deserve special recognition: Officers - Jim Sutherland, (President), Syd Robertson (1st VP), Rich Edelman (2nd VP), Joe Shannon (Secretary), John Pensec (Treasurer) and Lew Dickinson (Church representative); Executive Board (besides the above) - Joe Burns, Bob Stevenson, Mike Doherty and Giancarlo Bisone (all past presidents); 50th Anniversary Steering Committee and others who contributed significantly to the special activities and events - the current and past presidents on the Executive Board plus John Pensec, Charlie Tuch, Bill Carbone, Bob Morris, Arne Olsen, Paul Gregg, and Joe Lebert.

Hobbyists Unlimited was founded in 1966 as an outreach program of the First Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood, NJ by 16 members of the congregation. It has been a tremendously successful program, having grown to 447 members from a variety of religious affiliations and ethnic and professional backgrounds from area towns.

The members participate in over 30 different activities that fall in the general categories of sports and games, personal interests, and social and charitable activities. The first includes 9 separate activities ranging from bocce to walking, with golf and bowling drawing the most participants (over 70 each) and bridge representing the longest running. There are 14 personal interest groups covering books, photography, music, movies, investments, science and technology, military history, gourmet cooking and wine-making, all of which meet at least once a month. Amongst the 8 social and charitable activities are Habitat for Humanity, dinner/dances, trips and tours, and our own band, The Hobbyaires.

Members range in age from their early 60's to one who just had his 104th birthday (and still plays bridge every week). Approximately 35 members are over 90 years old and the average age is about 78. The members are very active and participation is high.

It has been a very successful and mutually beneficial 50-year relationship with The First Presbyterian Church. We are very thankful and grateful for its sponsorship and support and look forward to many more years of fruitful cooperation.

Jim Sutherland  
President

**The following are the 2016 annual reports submitted by the various Activity Chairmen.**

## Club Reports - 2016

### Newsletter

The Quarterly Hobbyists Newsletter is distributed to all members by mailing and/or Web Site and contains information about Activities, New Members, In Memoriam, Trips and Tours, Monthly Speakers, Up-Coming Events and highlights accomplishments and/or awards achieved by members. In addition, a Biography of the Incoming President, a Hobbyists Profile of a member and articles of interest submitted by the membership are included in each issue. The Newsletter staff for the year 2016 included Arne Olsen (editor) and Bill Carbone, Paul Gregg and Bill Daly.

*Arne Olsen - Chairman*

### Hobbyists Camera Club

The Hobbyists Camera Club started its activities in January 2009. The main purpose of the club is to learn and improve the photographic skills of the members while having fun taking pictures. Attention is also given to the computer programs used to manage and enhance digital photos.

The Camera Club meets once a month on the first Wednesday of the month at 2:00pm in the Church Auditorium. Throughout the year, Photo Field Trips to a variety of locations/ events are also scheduled. Each meeting usually covers photography subjects and photo management and editing on the computer.

The interest in the Camera Club is still growing and, as of today, 108 Hobbyists have signed up to be members. On average 25 attended the monthly meetings.

In 2016 we had 3 Photo Field Trips:

- Downtown Manhattan - New York
- Empty Sky Memorial - Jersey City
- PhotoPlus Expo

A Photo Contest among all Club Members was held at the beginning of the year. All the Hobbyists were asked to pick their favorite photo and the winners were the photos that got the most votes. Giancarlo Bisone won the 1st place, Lou Karcher took 2nd and 3rd places. Jim Sutherland and Joe LeBert were voted Honorable Mentions.

For the whole month of May, 25 Members showed their best work in a photo exhibition held at the Stable in Ridgewood. The exhibition was well received and we got a lot of very positive feedback.

To celebrate the Hobbyists Unlimited 50th Anniversary, a special Photo Exhibition was held at the Ridgewood Library in October. 22 Members showed their best work and the exhibition was very well received.

In addition, monthly assignments were given to the Camera Club Members like taking pictures of animals, photos in B&W, summer photos, fall colors, photos predominantly blue and fruits & vegetables.

*Giancarlo Bisone - Chairman*

### **Golf Club**

The year 2016 turned out to be a banner year for the Golf Activity. Our registration in 2016 totaled 82 golfers up from 74 in 2015 and was an all-time high since our club was founded 50 years ago. We began the season with our 5<sup>th</sup>. annual golf trip to the Atlantic City region in early May. Throughout 2016 our members participated in weekly play on both Tuesday's and Friday's and on occasion traveling to some of the best public golf courses in both New Jersey and New York. We also held two matches against other golf clubs culminated by us beating the Activities Unlimited Retirement Club of Wyckoff. Our Club Championship match was held in mid-September attended to by almost 50 golfers and this year's champion was Gary Don. We ended our outdoor season with a great golf luncheon in early November with an attendance of 50 golfers with everyone going home with a golf related prize. Although our outdoor season officially ended at the end of October, we will continue to play simulator golf indoors throughout the winter for anyone that wishes to participate.

We look forward to another banner year in 2017.

*Paul Fazio., Chair Hobbyist Golf Activity.*

### **The Hobbyists Book Club**

The Hobbyists Book Club meets monthly in the Church Library, at 10:00am, on the third Friday of the month. The member who originally recommended the book under consideration leads the discussion, with between fifteen to twenty-five members in attendance.

November: *Our Man in Charleston*, by Christopher Dickey, led by John Butler. The Story of the British consul in Charleston, S.C., who helped prevent the English from intervening during the U.S. Civil War on behalf of the Confederacy.

October: *The Billion Dollar Spy*, by David Hoffman, led by Syd Robertson. The story of the CIA's Moscow station's espionage efforts during the Cold War.

September: *The Wright Brothers*, by David McCullough, led by Jonathan King. The story of the remarkable efforts of the Wright Brothers to achieve manned, powered flight, thereby opening vastly greater horizons for us all.

June: *Dead Wake*, by Erik Larsen, led by Bill Carbone. The story of the sinking of H.M.S. Lusitania, which resulted in the entrance of the U.S. into WWI.

May: *Miracle at Philadelphia*, by Catherine Drinker Bowen, led by John Fabian and Paul Gregg. Chosen as part of the Hobbyists Fiftieth Anniversary celebration, this book, originally

published in 1966, chronicles the events which took place at the U.S. Constitutional Convention in 1787.

April: *The Boys in the Boat*, by Daniel Broun, led by Tom Folger. The story of the U.S. collegiate athletes who triumphed at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, winning the gold medal in the crew event.

March: *The Arsenal of Democracy*, by A.J. Blaine, led by Ed Houlihan. The role of Ford Motors in helping the U.S. win in WWII, by producing overpowering numbers of heavy bombers at Ford's Willow Run Plant in Detroit.

February: *The Presidents' War*, by Chris Derose, led by Cliff Mathews. The story of how four U.S. Presidents were instrumental in fomenting and prosecuting the American Civil War.

January: *The Quartet*, by Joseph Ellis, led by Peter Philip. The story of four of our Founding Fathers who helped to shape our Constitution.

*Alan Stein - Chairman*

### **Hobbyists Concerned**

As a community of retired men, and their surviving widows, we try to keep one another informed of illnesses, deaths and memorials involving members and their spouses/survivors, so that we can lend support, assistance and, when necessary, console those who are in need of consolation.

If a Hobbyist has passed away, his widow remains on the list of those who need to be informed when another member or spouse becomes ill, injured or has died, because Hobbyists and their spouses/companions have often known and traveled together for a number of years, during which time they have developed strong bonds and concerns about one another. Discretion is observed with regard to considerations of privacy.

During the course of 2016 we have distributed notices of these various events, as follows:

	Members	Spouses/Widows
Illnesses/Injuries	21	2
Deaths	13	9
Memorials	5	4

*Alan Stein - Chairman*

## **Extended trips**

April 28 - May 6 24 people toured Phoenix, Arizona and the Grand Canyon

June 28 - July 10 14 people enjoyed the cruise on the Danube River from Budapest, Hungary to the Black Sea

June 29 - July 13 12 people toured the Canadian Rockies from Calgary to Vancouver

August 24 - 26 22 people toured the Gettysburg National Military Park and the Penn Dutch farmlands

*Ray Cheesman - Chairman*

## **Science & Technology Annual Activity Report (12/2015 to 11/2016)**

It was a very active and educational third season for the Science & Technology Club. The club met on the third Wednesday of each month from September thru June with excellent attendance that averaged ten members of the Hobbyists group. The topics covered a wide range of scientific and technical subjects that were presented by club members and viewed on TED talks and NOVA programs. These talks covered topics that included Robotics, Drones, Venom, Computer Hacking, Science History and Talks by our members on the history of computers and the development of digital photography.

As the Computer Club was disbanded we have agreed to integrate it into our group.

*Elliot Ratchik - Chairman*

## **Hobbyists Hikers Club**

During the past twelve months, the group made about 48 hikes on Tuesdays at various locations in NJ, New York City and New York State normally within a 10 to 40 mile radius of Ridgewood. Locations range from New Paltz NY in the north, to Sandy Hook in the south, to the Delaware Water Gap in the west. A volunteer hike leader selects the hike location and route, and leads the members through the planned route. A data base of past hikes is maintained to help in route planning (See Hiking tab on the Hobbyists website). Participants range from 8 to 15 and normally average around 12. Hikes range in length between 5 and 10 miles depending on terrain and route. Most weeks there is also an opportunity for those men who wish to walk a lesser distance or less challenging terrain to take an alternative course (flex hike). In weeks of inclement or extreme weather, we meet at a local restaurant for lunch.

In addition to the regular weekly hikes, we had a fall walk luncheon for hikers, walkers and their spouses/friends. A 3 day hiking trip to the Catskill Mountains was also held in October with 15 participants. Format will continue unchanged for 2017 and Ed Collins will continue as Chair.

*Ed Collins - Chairman*

## **Winemakers' Club**

This has been a very busy year for the Winemakers' club.

First of all, we bottled three different 60 gallon barrels of wine

Our most successful wine bottled this past year was an ITALIAN AMARONE. We crushed and pressed it in the month of October, 2014. It matured in the barrel for 18 months and was bottled in April of 2016. At the Wine Experience (the company where we make our wine) Dinner it was awarded a double gold medal meaning that all of the wine sommeliers who tasted it awarded it a gold medal. It is an excellent bottle of wine.

Our next barrel of wine also matured for 18 months. It was a Bordeaux blend which also turned out to be a very nice wine.

Next we made a 60 gallon barrel which matured in the wine barrel for 9 months. This particular wine was an Opus One blend (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec). It was awarded a silver medal at the dinner. It is a very nice tasting wine that was made in 2015.

Finally, this past October the participating members went down to Tinton Falls in order to crush and press a 60 gallon barrel of a "Super Tuscan" blend (Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon). The juice produced upon pressing the grapes was extremely sweet and should turn out to be a magnificent bottle of wine.

I would like to thank the Hobbyists Unlimited for sponsoring our winemakers' club. It has proven to be a very well accepted activity and those members who take part in the process continually express their enthusiasm for the making of wine. I would again like to encourage any Hobbyist member who may have an interest in participating but does not wish to purchase a case or more of wine to take part in the various tasks that are entailed in the winemaking process. It has become a most enjoyable activity for those participating and one that we all look forward to.

*Paul Richert - Chairman*

## **Habitat for Humanity**

Work continues throughout the year for both Bergen and Paterson Habitat for Humanity.

Bergen Habitat - A groundbreaking ceremony was held on January 9<sup>th</sup> for the start of construction of a new single family house at 110 Bergen Avenue in Bergenfield. Volunteer activities started in March. Two Hobbyists – Ed Daly and Ray Cheesman are regular volunteers with other Hobbyists participating on an ad hoc basis.

Paterson Habitat - Paterson Habitat continues to be very active in the Fourth Ward. Four new homes were completed two on Godwin Avenue (#28 and 30) and two on Auburn St. (#43 and 47). Five new homes on Hamilton Avenue, Godwin Avenue and Governor Street are currently under construction. Projects are in varying stages of completion providing for a variety of work from building exterior walls and decks, to installing flooring, doors, cabinets and trim.

Rich Edelman was part of a 13 person team from Paterson Habitat that traveled to New Orleans from February 10th to 14th to assist the New Orleans affiliate in its new home construction work.

As a special event for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, another successful "Hobbyists for Habitat" day was held on July 20<sup>th</sup> in support of Paterson Habitat for Humanity. A group of 12 Hobbyists and their wives dug post holes, built a deck frame and stairs, and installed sheet rock nailers at two homes on Hamilton and Godwin Avenues. Thanks to the team which included Ed and Judy Collins, Ed and Janet Daly, Bill Carbone, Dick Oswald, Ed Lundell, Ray Cheesman, Bob Stevenson, Sean Flanagan and Don Hart.

*Rich Edelman - Chairman*

### **Bowling Club**

The bowling league sports activity is the highest attended in the club. The league plays at Brunswick lanes in Fair Lawn and consists of 20 teams with four members on each team (80 participants) and 6 standby substitutes in case of absences. The participants are all ages ranging from 62 to 95 and have bowling averages from 110 to 200. You can see there is quite a bit of variation in both the ages and scores, yet all are welcome and all have a great time.

The league season runs from September to May and consists of three eleven week sessions. At the end of the year, the three session winners and the team with the most points won are our "final Four" , who vie for the club championship.

We hold an annual luncheon at the end of the season. Prizes are awarded to the winning teams (all final four participants); high average, high game and high series for both the team and individual. We also have a separate category for our 80 and over bowlers. Individual awards are also given to them.

One of our highlights is our "NINE PIN - No TAP" Turkey Bowl. In this event, a nine or a ten on the first ball counts as a strike and scores can be pretty high. In fact we have had a couple of perfect 300 scores.

Bowling is a great weekly activity which a significant portion of the membership enjoy.

*Charlie Tuch - Chairman*

### **Dinner/Dances**

The dinner dance social activity is our most attended in the club. Three dances are held including a Spring Hawaiian Luau, Fall Dance and the Holiday Dance. The attendance at our dances typically average approximately 240 people and include a broad spectrum of our club. One will find attendees ranging in age from 60 to 85 and include all backgrounds, faiths and political affinities.



Our dances consist of a cocktail hour, sit down dinner and live music or a DJ. The dinner dances are held at Season's in Washington Township and have been priced to be affordable to all club members. Our dinner dances promote good fellowship, improved member relationships and good clean fun. Two of our highlights this past year were our Hawaiian Luau and the 50th anniversary Dinner Dance. The 50th Anniversary dance was attended by 358 people and was a great celebration of our club's past 50 years.

*Charlie Tuch - Chairman*

### **Gourmet Cooking Club**

The group, which is limited to Hobbyists only and does not include spouses, has 18 active members who plan and execute two luncheons per year at a member's home. All participants must prepare their own dish according to a prescribed menu. Wine pairing is included.

In June of 2016, the Group returned to 'French' and in November the group experimented with 'New Orleans'. This Spring 2017 the Group will do "Italian". Northern or Southern----TBD. Past endeavors included German, Irish/British Isles, Spanish (Spain), French, Italian, Seafood, Barbeque, Poultry, and Famous Chefs (re James Keller) menus.

*Jim McKeown - Chairman*

### **Movie Lovers**

We schedule one movie each month except July and August at the Village Hall. Attendance is open to the public, as we are using the Village facilities and the schedule is published by the Parks and Recreation Dept. Attendance was generally from about 10 to 15. Most were Hobbyists and their wives or widows. The films were selected either because they are considered classics or because they are little-known and of high quality and/or interest. This year, in observance of our 50th anniversary, I chose movies that were released in 1966 or that focussed on people of our age (one exception: Modern Times was a last-minute substitute for Going in Style, which was not available). Normally attendees are encouraged to select and present their own choices; I chose all of them this year except for Going My Way (presented by Jim Feeney, in March, in recognition of St. Patrick's Day). The titles were:

A Man and a Woman  
The Sunshine Boys  
Cocoon  
Georgy Girl  
Going My Way  
Seconds  
Alfie  
Modern Times  
Strangers in Good Company  
Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

*Dick Oswald - Chairman*

## **Tennis**

Doubles tennis is played on Mondays at the Fair Lawn Racquet Club from mid-Sept. to mid-May. At present we have 25 active players and 9 inactive (usually because of illness, injury or extended absence). Six "captains" on a rotating schedule are responsible for making up the foursomes and collecting the fees. The number of players each Monday normally ranges from 16 to 20 depending on availability and the constraint of having to schedule multiples of four.

From mid-May to mid-Sept. we play outdoors on Mondays and Wednesdays at the public courts on Bellair Rd. This is unscheduled; if we have more or less than a full foursome we adapt in various ways. Usually four to eight players show up.

We have a surplus of cash which accumulated over the years owing to a small difference between the fee charged by the Racquet Club and that charged to the players (set at an even \$10 to avoid making change for everyone). In observance of our 50th anniversary we spent some of this surplus in the following ways:

- 1) A can of balls was given (to be used twice) to each court every other Monday (normally players use their own).
- 2) A group lesson with the Racquet Club pros was offered to all interested players.
- 3) "Cash" prizes (gift cards) were given to the winners of our 3-round elimination tournament: \$50 each to winners Fred Damiano and Hugh Rodgers, and \$25 each to runners-up George Shabet and Rob Morris.
- 4) There was no charge to the players for the end-of-season luncheon in May.

For the first time ever (to our knowledge), entertainment was provided at the luncheon. We were fortunate to be able to book on short notice, straight from his Las Vegas engagement, the noted Johnny Cash impersonator Johnny Horizon (known to his friends as George Shabet).

*Dick Oswald*