

## **Hobbyists Unlimited Annual Report – 2016-2017**

2016-2017 was a somewhat more typical year, after our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration last year, with a return to regular order. However, it was another successful year with many Activities and accomplishments. In that regard, we reviewed and updated our Constitution and our Policies, Procedures And Practices (PPP), which had not been changed in ten years. In particular, we shifted the monthly General Meeting to a uniform start time (for Tables, Signups and Social Hour) of 9:00 AM, reflecting Member preferences, and aiding Activity and Church scheduling. We ended the year within Budget and with a total Membership of 440.

As is typically the case, our successful year can be attributed to the efforts of a great many members, especially the Activities Chairmen. However, the following deserve special recognition: Officers – Syd Robertson, (President), Rich Edelman (1st VP), Ed Daly (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 Jim Sutherland (all past presidents); The Constitution and PPP Review Committee Chaired by Bob Stevenson and including Rich Edelman, Bob Morris, Bob Norelli, Jim Sutherland and Bill Carbone. Their tireless work in reviewing, updating and rewriting these key documents will put the organization in position to continue its activities into the next decade.

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 440 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. In addition, there are a number of one-time fellowship events such as the Annual Fellowship Luncheon and the St. Patrick's Day luncheon. Finally, ROMEO (Retired Older Men Eating Out) and WAG (Wine Appreciation Group) provide nearly monthly opportunities to socialize with other members.

Members range in age from their early 60's to one who just had his 105th birthday (and is still active). Some 38 members are over 90 years old (about 9% of the

membership) and the average age of dues paying members is about 79 (members no longer pay dues after they reach age 90). We welcomed 28 new members in 2017 and they had an average age of about 73. We regret the passing of 9 Hobbyists' Members in 2017. The members are very active and participation is high. Attendance at monthly General Meetings averages 136.

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.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Sydney Robertson, President 2016-7**

The following are the 2017 annual reports submitted by the various Activity Chairmen:

**BOCCE:**

The Bocce Club meets every week. In the summer the bocce games are held at the Wilde Memorial Park in Glen Rock. In the cold season, members will play at the Superdome in Waldwick. For a long time this Club was led by Harry Neuman as Chairman, but he has had to step down due to his health and relocation. We thank Harry for his years of service to this Club. He will be replaced going forward by Roger Dubroff.

**LIVELY WIDOWERS:**

Lively Widowers meets once a month for lunch and fellowship. Harry Neuman also led this Club for a number of years and has now stepped down as indicated above. We also thank him for his years of service to this club. Bill Healy and Vince Campione have stepped forward and will lead the Club in the future.

**MUSIC LOVERS:**

The Music Club meets once a month in the First Presbyterian Church Chapel to listen and discuss music programs of high interest. Warren Boronson is Chair and Ray Lambert is Co-chair of this Club, but they are looking for a replacement.

**HOBBYIST HIKERS:**

During the past twelve months, the group made about 46 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 12 and normally average around 10. 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 9 participants.

Format will continue unchanged for 2018 and Ed Collins will continue as Chair.

#### **WALKING:**

The Walking Club meets every week to walk in from the Ridgewood Duck Pond to Dunkerhook and return. Peter Seibel is Chairman.

#### **INVESTOR'S CLUB:**

This group is under reorganization and will be Chaired by William Flynn.

#### **GOURMET COOKING:**

For those men who like to cook, this group meets twice a year to prepare a 4-6 course meal with wine pairing included. Each member of the group is required to prepare his selected dish to comply with the dinner theme, such as French, German, Italian, etc. The group is Chaired by Jim McKeown.

#### **DINNER/DANCE:**

The Dinner Dance Committee consisted of Phil Almeida, Ed Daly and Bill Healy. The committee organized three events during the 2016/2017 year. The Holiday dinner dance was held on December 13, 2016. Two hundred forty nine Hobbyists and guests attended. The amount was roughly twenty five fewer than average. This was due to the proximity of the Holiday dance to the fiftieth anniversary dance which drew a record crowd.

The second was the Spring Fling held on May 8, 2017. Two hundred and thirty eight attended. Finally, the Fall dinner dance was held on October 9, 2017. One hundred fifty attended.

## **WINEMAKERS**

The Wine Experience has an annual dinner in August at which medals are presented for wines crafted over the previous year. The wine judges belong to the NJ Winetasters' Association. We did not have a wine entered this year in the competition.

We also have another wine maturing in a different 60 gallon barrel. This wine is a Sangiovese/Cabernet Sauvignon blend. We will be bottling this second wine in April of 2018. We contracted to allow the wine to mature for 1 ½ years in the barrel. There are 24 Hobbyists invested in this barrel as well with some sharing partial barrels and a couple purchasing 2 barrels each.

Hobbyists who have participated in this process have thoroughly enjoyed this experience. Each visit to the winery includes a task to be completed combined with sampling of wines made by the winery and sampling of cheeses and deli meats. Afterwards we often go to a nearby restaurant for lunch. One of my most often repeated messages to the members is that anyone who drives to and from the winery MUST avoid drinking any alcohol to excess. I personally am always one of the drivers since I do NOT consume wine in excess when we take these trips.

I wish to thank the Hobbyist organization for allowing this club to be a part of the Hobbyist club offerings. It has been a most enjoyable experience for all who have participated. I look forward to many more years of winemaking with the Hobbyists.

Paul H. Richert

Chairman – Hobbyist Winemakers' Club

## **BOOK CLUB:**

The Book Club meets at 10:00 am in the Church Library, each month on the third Friday of the month, except during the months of July, August and December.

We discuss a different book (or books), previously announced, and our discussions are facilitated by the person who originally nominated the book(s). Approximately sixteen Hobbyists attend each meeting, with the highest number in attendance, so far this year, being twenty-two. Books are selected by vote of the Book Club members, based on the recommendation of other members. )

Our selections and facilitators for 2017 were as follows:

January	<i>The Greatest Generation</i> , by Tom Brokaw, facilitated by John Fabian
February	<i>In the Heart of the Sea</i> , by Nathaniel Philbrick, facilitated by Ed Houlihan
March	<i>A Basque History of the World</i> , by Mark Kurbansky, facilitated by John Butler
April	<i>A World on Fire</i> by Amanda Foreman, facilitated by John Butler
May	<i>Hero of the Empire</i> , by Candace Millard, facilitated by Cliff Matthews
June	<i>Lafayette in the Somewhat United States</i> , by Sarah Vowell, facilitated by Syd Robertson
July/August	Summer Break
September	<i>The Stranger</i> , by Albert Camus, facilitated by Ed Houlihan
October	<i>A Matter of Honor</i> , by Anthony Summers & Robyn Swan, <i>AND Countdown to Pearl Harbor</i> , by Steve Twomey, jointly facilitated by Bob Stevenson & Peter Philip
November	<i>The Imperial Cruise</i> , by James Bradley, facilitated by John Butler
December	Holiday Break

(In January 2018, we will discuss *Guns, Germs and Steel*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning treatise by Jared Diamond. It will be facilitated by Dom Casulli.

Thanks are due to all facilitators, and to Lori Steinbacher and others at the Ridgewood Library staff, who have been so helpful to our Book Club in the logistics of gathering sufficient copies of the books we read from libraries all around Bergen County, and beyond!.

Alan Stein and Peter Philip, Co-chairs

### **JAZZ CLUB:**

Nothing to report on the Jazz Club this year but we will be resume sponsoring the Pee Wee Russell Anniversary Jazz Concert in March 2018.

### **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER CLUB (S, T & C Club):**

The Club meets the third Wednesday of each Month at 2:00 PM in the Church Auditorium. Our meetings run for 10 Months from September to June. We have no meetings in July and August.

The Science and Technology Club (S&T Club) was expanded to include the Computer Club whose attendance had declined to the point that the club could no longer be active. So as not to eliminate the this club we suggested to its Chairman, Bob Morris, that it be incorporated into the S&T club. Now with the Computer Club as part of the S&T Club I have expanded and modified our presentations to include S,T & C topics. Each meeting presents topics such as Robotics, Medicine, Engineering, Biology and numerous other topics drawn from TED Talks, U-Tube or member recommended

videos.

Having a joint meeting with other clubs where a common topic is possible and developing a field trip is in progress.

Attendance was fairly constant with an average 10-12 members per meeting depending on the topic presented. I would like to thank the Church for installing WiFi which allows for an easier presentation setup.

Elliot Ratchik  
Chairman

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS:**

The Public activity had several successful meetings this past season, among them a very timely discussion of Opioid addiction in which Jack Rosenberg , PHD gave us the scientific base; the first 100 hundred days of the Trump administration; What's up with the electoral college and how has it been manipulated by George Skau; what's up with the teachers' pensions by our own Paul Richert; and more recently, a wide-open come with your gripes or huzzahs, quite stimulating, particularly about local property taxes.

### **BOWLING:**

The bowling league sports activity is one of the highest attended in the club. The league plays at Brunswick lanes in Fair Lawn and consists of 16 teams with four members on each team ( 64 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 enjoys.  
Charlie Tuch, Chairman

## **GOLF:**

The 2017 Hobbyist Golf Activity can be summed up in one word “Outstanding”. We began the year with over 90 Hobbyist registered to play golf which is a record turnout. The season runs from early April to late September consisting of weekly play on Tuesdays and Fridays and covering golf courses throughout New Jersey, and a few in Orange County, and the Hudson Valley. A few highlights included our annual trip to the Atlantic City region for 3 days of golf in May ; defeating two other retirement golf clubs , Activities Unlimited (Wyckoff) and the Ramsey Duffers (Ramsey); and three of our own tournaments in June, July and September. The club champion this year was Walter Perog shooting a score of 81. The season ended with a luncheon held on November 7<sup>th</sup>. at Mezza Luna’s Restaurant in Allendale attended by 54 Hobbyist members.

Paul Fazio, Chairman

## **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 2:00p 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, 106 Hobbyists have signed up to be member of the Camera Club and on average 25 attended the monthly meetings.

In 2017 we had 3 Photo Field Trips:

- Chihuly Exhibition - New York Botanic Garden
- NJ Festival of Ballooning - Readington, NJ
- 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. Tom Heed won the 1<sup>st</sup> place, Walter Staab took 2<sup>nd</sup> and a Honorable Mention, Bob Sayegh won the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize. Giancarlo Bisone was 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 feedbacks.

Moreover, assignments were given to the Camera Club Members like taking pictures of Halloween, Places of Worship, Hobbyists being Hobbyists, Street Photography, Chairs, Spring Blossoms and Reflections.

### **MOVIE LOVERS:**

We schedule one movie each month except July and August at the Village Hall. The March 2017 showing was cancelled because of a snowstorm. 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. Attendees are encouraged to select and present their own choices, but seldom do. I chose all of them this year except for "Steam Bath" and "Hobson's Choice", presented by Rick Pascal. The titles were:

Steam Bath  
Brief Encounter  
The Bicycle Thief  
The Thief of Bagdad  
Odd Man Out  
Hobson's Choice  
Sunset Boulevard  
My Week with Marilyn  
Gate of Hell

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 32 active players and 6 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 24 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). 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) "Cash" prizes (gift cards) were given to the winners of our 3-round elimination tournament: \$25 each to winners Chet Greenleaf and George Dee, and \$15 each to runners-up Jim Charette and Bob Scrivani.
- 3) There was no charge to the players for the end-of-season luncheon in May.

Back by popular demand at the luncheon was the noted Johnny Cash impersonator Johnny Horizon.

Dick Oswald, Co-Chairman  
George Shabet, Co-Chairman

### **POKER:**

Poker is played every Friday at member's homes on a rotational basis.  
Hi-Lo Poker is played every other Friday, for information please contact Paul Levin at 201-444-7729.  
Texas Hold'em is played on the opposite Friday, contact Dan Wolf at 201-825-7769.  
Both games have plenty of subs. Efforts are being considered to include more people.

### **LUNCH BUNCH:**

The Lunch Bunch is a Sunday lunch at a local restaurant attended by members and their wives. This year we met at the following restaurants:

Sage in Fair Lawn on February 26,2017  
Bellissimo in Montvale on November 5,2017

Robert Sayegh, Chairman

### **DAY TRIPS AND TOURS:**

Westchester Broadway Theatre on March 30, 2017-Mamma Mia  
Lincoln Center on May 3, 2017-N Y Philharmonic Rehearsals  
Kykuit and Union Church of Pocantico Hills on May 11, 2017  
Westchester Broadway Theatre on October 12, 2017-Annie Get Your Gun

Robert Sayegh, Chairman

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY:**

The year 2017 saw a very high level of activity in Paterson, but only limited building activity in Bergen County.

Bergen Habitat completed a single family home in Bergenfield in February. For the balance of the year hobbyists supported set up of a Bergen Habitat Restore located in Westwood. A four unit project is in development in Washington Township with construction start planned for December 2017.

Hobbyists are actively working in support of Paterson Habitat for Humanity's ambitious construction program. During the year we helped complete six new single family homes in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward (Hamilton and Godwin Avenues) and the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward (Holsman, Clinton, N, 3<sup>rd</sup> St.), Work continues on new homes on Rosa Parks Blvd., Godwin Ave., and .

In an effort to recruit additional Hobbyist volunteers, another "Hobbyists for Habitat" day was held on August 9<sup>th</sup> in support of Paterson Habitat. Eight volunteers participated. Good fellowship and a sense of pride in helping the community was enjoyed by all.

A number of new Hobbyist members have joined in working on Habitat projects, and prospects are good to further increase the number of Hobbyists supporting this important program.

Ray Cheesman and Rich Edelman took part in a Global Village trip by Bergen Habitat to build homes in Charleston, SC. Rich was also part of a Paterson Habitat for Humanity team that traveled to Africa to build homes for orphaned children in a small village in Malawi.

Rich Edelman, Chairman