

The Maplewood Club History

An Overview

In 1966, as a part of a 50th Anniversary book, Henry Niemitz, Bob Bird and Lacy Seabrook wrote a comprehensive Maplewood Club history. In 1996, Charlie Bibbins updated this history for the Spirit, the club newsletter, drawing heavily on the earlier information.

In 1916, the Maplewood Club was founded on the mission of providing "...other sports and diversions, and to promote sociability and good fellowship among the members of the community and to furnish them with club facilities."



The Club's certificate of incorporation was filed with the NJ Secretary of State on February 10, 1916. On February 28, the Tennis Club incorporators met for the first time to vote on the \$8000 needed to build a clubhouse at the corner of Claremont Avenue and Ridgewood Road. Membership was set at 125. On February 29, The Tennis Club purchased much of the current property from Budal Realty Co.

A month later, the incorporators held their first meeting as trustees and elected Samuel Baldwin as the first president. Among other items on their agenda, they voted to secure a loan for \$8000 to grade the property, build a clubhouse, purchase a set of bowling alleys and change the name of the club to "The Maplewood Club" (note that it was not until 1922 that South Orange Township was renamed Maplewood). In May, 37 members of the Club held the first annual spring meeting and approved all of the foregoing proposals, plus a Constitution and By-Laws. The latter, in addition to the usual provisions, prohibited "liquor or alcoholic beverages of any kind" and prohibited entertainment or activities in the clubhouse on Sunday. A motion to also prohibit tennis on Sunday lost by one vote. By December 1916, construction on the clubhouse had been completed.

Four tennis courts were authorized in 1916, and two were surfaced the next year. A third court was surfaced in 1936. These were all red clay courts. In the 1940s, the court 4 area was used for children's activities and included a swing, trapeze and seesaw as well as a space for croquet and badminton. Court 4 was finally surfaced in 1957. Drainage problems plagued the clay surfaces of all the courts, resulting in a loss of two to three days in playing time whenever it rained. Therefore, in 1979, the clay was replaced with Har-Tru.

In 1920, a second pair of bowling alleys was built at the same time that the west end of the clubhouse was extended. In 1965, the alleys were fully rebuilt, new lighting and paneling were installed and the hand-set pins were replaced with automatic pinsetters.

In the early 1960s, Club leadership developed plans were developed to build a Club swimming pool (the Maplewood Municipal Pool did not open until 1966). A large number of new "pool members" were added, each of whom paid a \$200 deposit. A hole for the pool was dug in 1963, but a lawsuit ensued, leading to a December 1964 NJ Supreme Court ruling that the pool could be built only if the Club received approval from the town zoning board, as it was a non-conforming use. The Club scrapped the proposal, though the end result was not all bad—while the Club returned all deposits, most of the pool members chose to join the Club, and the membership increased significantly.

The following article appeared on the front page of the March 10, 1916 Home News of Millburn, Maplewood and South Orange, the weekly predecessor to the News Record.

NEW CLUB FORMING IN MAPLEWOOD

It is well known in certain social circles in Maplewood that public announcements will soon be made concerning a new club recently organized. The property facing on both Ridgewood road and Claremont avenue has already been purchased. The membership of the club will be limited to 125, and in order to become a member candidates must be proposed by a member and each member must subscribe for one share of stock valued at \$100. The yearly dues will be \$30. Plans are now being made by the architect for a clubhouse, and the grounds will be laid out for the present to provide tennis courts for the members. We are told that there is no intention to oppose the Maplewood Field Club [now known as the Maplewood Country Club] which has a large membership, but that the new club is being organized principally to provide a place in town where the ladies can entertain a party of friends at teas or receptions which they cannot do at the Field Club owing to the lack of proper facilities.

It is said the new club is practically a community affair to provide conveniences which the Field Club does not afford its members.

We are not at liberty at this time to publish the names of the members in the new club, but will be prepared to furnish this information at an early date. We can say, however, that the new club will number among the membership the most elite in Maplewood society.

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Timeline of Early Club Construction

1911: Much of the current club property was owned by G. E. Menzel. The lands west of the Club (on both sides of what is now Hemlock Court) were owned by William E. Bird Jr., an early Club member. Lands extending all the way up to Wyoming Avenue were owned by Carrie Hatch.

January 1916: The Tennis Club purchased land from Budal Realty for \$1000 or \$7000 (the deed is unclear). A 40' strip from Claremont to the property and was the only access for the Club. Edwin Hatch, a charter Club member, bought more land C, D and E from Budal, and gave the Club an option to buy them. We do not know the relationship between Edwin Hatch and Carrie Hatch, who owned this property 5 years earlier when Budal bought it.

March 1916: The Club conveyed a 6' strip of land to Warren Denton of 13 Claremont, a charter member, to allow him access to the street. This house was subsequently renumbered 11 and was later owned by Club members the Martis, the Butterlys, the Steiners and the Weinbergers.

May 1916: The Tennis Club changed its name to the Maplewood Club.

December 1916: The clubhouse was completed.

February 1917: The Maplewood Club bought a 40' strip of land from Edwin Hatch and built its driveway.

October 1917: The Maplewood Club began negotiations with Edwin Hatch's bankruptcy trustee to buy land to use as a parking lot. This sale was completed in April 1918 for \$1700.

May 1918: The Maplewood Club reached agreement with Club member Harry Brophy of 487 Ridgewood Rd (now Trish Johnston's home) for him to use the MC driveway as rear access for an annual fee of \$1.00. A similar agreement was reached with the owner of 491 Ridgewood. A few years later, a number of Trustees' discussions centered on the fact that Brophy was not making his payments.

October 1927: The Maplewood Club leased a 25' strip of land to J. Monroe Graham of 11 Claremont and Alfred Nowakowski of 15 Claremont at \$150/year for 10 years plus for another \$1/year for the rights to access Claremont. Sometime later (we are not sure when), a 19' strip of land was sold to the owners of 9 Claremont and another 15' to 11 Claremont. A 2' right-of-way was retained to provide a permanent access by foot from Claremont to the Club.

A Brief History of Our Block

The house at 491 Ridgewood Road next to our driveway was built in 1767. One early owner, William Ross, had a blacksmith shop on what is now the club driveway. The house was bought in 1803 by Caleb Durand, cousin of the noted Maplewood-born painter Asher B. Durand. The Durand family owned the house until 1879.

In 1811, Caleb Durand sold a piece of his property bordering on Bear Lane (now Claremont Avenue) and Grub Street (now Ridgewood Road) to the trustees of the Jefferson Village Baptist Church. This area roughly coincided with the first four lots up Claremont now on the Club side. A small chapel was built on the corner, which soon became known as the Babel Chapel. The chapel was sold in 1858 to the Jefferson Village Methodist-Episcopal Church, which subsequently moved it to the current Morrow Memorial M-E Church site. A plot of land behind the original chapel was used for a cemetery that ultimately included at least 15 Revolutionary War soldiers.



Membership

Despite a by-law prohibiting women from joining the club, Mrs. Grace Kilburn was accepted as a full member in 1917, and was an active participant for a couple of years. We can find no other such exception, although, according to the 50th Anniversary book, in the late 1930s Mickey (Mrs. Max) Clason served a term as Trustee. Mickey had been head of the Women's Committee, which had played a major role in the Club since its inception. In 1917, the Ladies' Committee presented a clock to the Club. More recently, the Women's Committee gifted the club a piano found at a rummage sale they ran. They scheduled a very active social program for many years, including a series of afternoon bridges, often with accompanying activities such as fashion shows, and a Sunday afternoon tea dance.

By April 1917, the membership had grown to 95, and four years later reached 121. However, a diminishing interest in tennis led to a drop to 83 by fall 1923. It remained at about this level until 1930, but then plunged to 41 by October 1931 and to 32 in February 1933, during the height of the Great Depression. In 1935 it was back to 65, but then again dropped to 41 in 1938 and remained low throughout World War II. Around 1949, the Trustees contemplated closing the Club, but deferred this to test a suggestion by John Apetz to create a Tennis Membership where people could play for a lesser charge but have no clubhouse privileges. This was successful, and the membership grew steadily to 87 in 1953, 93 in 1961 and 149 in 1963 as a result of the pool effort.

In 1975 President Ted Northrup appointed a by-laws review committee with the understanding that the restrictive membership clause with respect to women be re-evaluated. At the next annual meeting (in 1976) the members approved the committee's proposal to eliminate any barrier to women being members or trustees. The membership limit was then doubled to 300. No one resigned in protest. At that same meeting, Med Ripley became the first woman member to be elected a trustee. In 1982, Jana Maher was voted the first woman president. The by-laws were subsequently changed to allow the Club to accept up to ten additional members "in anticipation of resignations" so in effect the current limit is 310.

List of Club Presidents

1916 Samuel W Baldwin

1916-1918 Charles J. Van Gunten

1918-1919 J.G. Trusdell-Moore

1919-1920 J. Monroe Graham

1920-1922 Richard D. Whitton

1922-1924 Eugene C. Estep

1924-1925 George W. Otis

1925-1926 Samuel G. Memory

1926-1927 Douglas Swift

1927-1929 Roland H. Zinn

1929-1930 Lawrence E. Falls

1930-1932 Alexander E. Bauhan

1932-1933 Jephtha A. Wade

1933-1935 John S. Wright

1935-1936 Harlan S. DeVoe

1936-1939 Guy D. Potter

1939-1940 Max O. Clason

1940-1942 Ernest A. Cain

1942-1944 Frank Timson

1944-1946 Howard Reed

1946-1948 John F. McKenna

1948-1951 Arthur H. Bolton

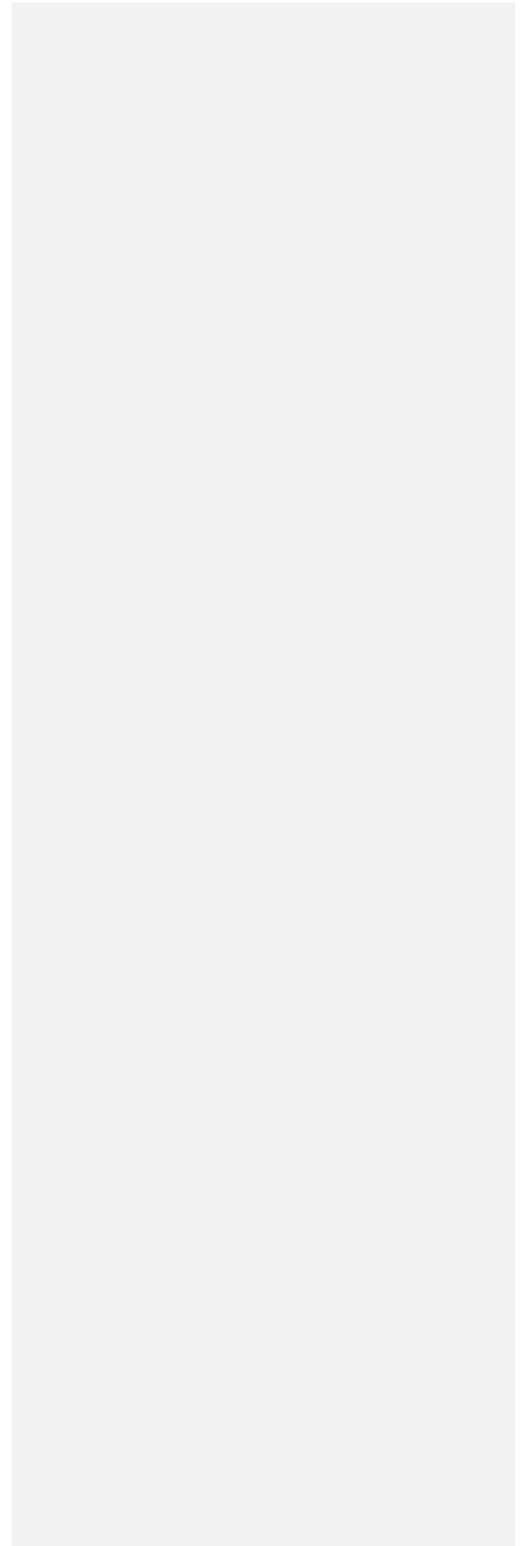
1951-1953 J. Lawrence Boyd

1953-1955 Gordon D. MacCoy

1955-1956 Frank R. Carmines

1956-1958 Clifford N. Wells

1958-1960 William M. Gaston
1960-1962 Warren K. Rodat
1962-1964 Leonard B. Faupel
1964-1966 Donald K. Schweikert
1966-1968 Charles E. "Ted" Villanueva
1968-1969 Edward J. Lynott Jr.
1969-1971 Harold T. Sasso
1971-1972 Gerald L. Turley
1972-1973 Kenneth R. Dawe
1973-1974 Fred McClintock
1974-1975 Charles L. Johnson Jr
1975-1977 Theodore D. Northrup
1977-1979 Robert W. Liptak
1979-1981 Donald B. Knox
1981-1982 Peter W. Rupprecht
1982-1984 Jana Maher
1984-1986 Roger Hill
1986-1988 Robert J. Bolderman
1988-1990 Michael Keeler
1990-1992 Penny V. Dinger
1992-1994 Charles L. Koch
1994-1997 James V. Lengeling
1997-1999 Chris Amundsen
1999-2002 Jay Eisenberg
2002-2004 Jon Clark



2004-2006

2006-2008 Pablo Chamorro

2008- 2010 Mike Paradis

2010-2012 Kai Moi

2012-2014 Lisa Rott

2014-2016 Andrew Haines

Commented [LL1]: Was there no president then? Please specify.

Courts

Despite a dearth of members leading into World War II, it was then that court 3 was created. Court 4 remained a grassy area for children to play. The Board's first meeting on March 20, 1916 authorized the building of courts, and the House and Grounds Committee moved quickly to contract for the laying out of four courts and the surfacing of two of them. By June 1917, the Club could invite the Orange Lawn Tennis Club, Maplewood Field Club, Madison Golf Club, Short Hills Club and Chatham Fish and Game Club to participate in a ladies' singles tennis tournament for the benefit of the American Red Cross.

In 1919, the first men's singles and doubles tournaments were held with Paul Jackson winning the singles and teaming with F. J. Parsons to win the doubles. Yet by 1921 the tennis chairman reported that tennis usage was down because many members were taking up golf instead and many others "were arriving at the corpulent age so do not enjoy tennis." By 1925, so few members were playing that the fall tournaments were cancelled.

By 1927, the Club felt it necessary to offer summer tennis memberships with no social privileges for \$10 each. In the spring of 1931, using the \$200 authorized by the Trustees the previous year, the Club resurfaced courts 1 and 2, repaired the courts' fencing and did some preparatory work on the courts 3 and 4.

In 1936, when membership reached 67, court 3 was resurfaced and brought to playing shape for the first time. Two years later, membership had dropped to 41 and only two courts were in proper playing condition. As a result, the Trustees that year authorized issuance of limited tennis memberships at \$15 a year. In May 1939 there were 21 regular and 2 limited tennis members, and a year later there were 25 regular and 5 limited tennis members.

This number was an improvement sufficient to allow the renovation of court 3 and the leveling and resurfacing of courts 1 and 2. That same year, the Club staged year-end tournaments in men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles, the first such competitions in some time. In 1940, an outdoor breakfast was held on the terrace on Memorial Day celebrating the end of the bowling season and the beginning of the tennis season. The first member-guest tournament was held in 1942.

In 1943, the Club's youngest set got a hand when a croquet set, see-saw, swing and trapeze were set up on the grass that grew on court 4. The following year, the level of tennis activity was reflected in the lists of 24 family and 14 individual memberships, and in 1945 a large new bulletin board was installed to publicize tennis events. Year-end tournaments then became a tradition.

In the early 1950s, houses were built on Hemlock Court above the Club. Consequently water began flowing through Club property, and a frequent waterfall turned the court 4 area into a quagmire. To counterbalance this, a deep U-shaped ditch was dug along the area above the court, west toward Hemlock and back just below the clubhouse starting and ending at the driveway. The ditch was filled with stones to help filter the water. Members dug out the area of Court 4 near the fence to a depth of 2' to create a drywell and filled it in with stones.

In 1949 Bruce Galbraith, a Seton Hall student, was hired as "Court Attendant/Tennis Instructor." He and a fellow student split the next season. Over the subsequent dozen years, the Club had an outside instructor for only one or two years. However, several of the women in the Club, especially Jane Gruning, gave lessons to the juniors. In 1964, Sam Shapiro began the first of three stints as tennis pro, covering 8 seasons and ending in 1985. Bill Winslow, a past Club men's champion, served as tennis instructor from 1974-79. Janet Bates (Faig) was the only lead female tennis pro (1983-4). Lew Wolfe joined as tennis pro in 1988 and served until 1999. He was followed by John Trinity and, after 2001, by Lou Castelli.

In the 1960s, the courts were often flooded in the winter for ice skating.

In 1999, under President Jim Lengeling's leadership, the Club undertook a \$140,000 renovation project precipitated by the pending collapse of the railroad ties above and below the courts. The steep, ivy covered slopes above the courts were replaced by the current terraces backed up by KeyStone retaining walls, which were also erected as retaining walls below the courts. The viewing area was relocated, drainage was substantially improved and considerable landscaping was added. Pat McGovern played a major role in the design of the changes and overseeing the contractor.

Tournaments

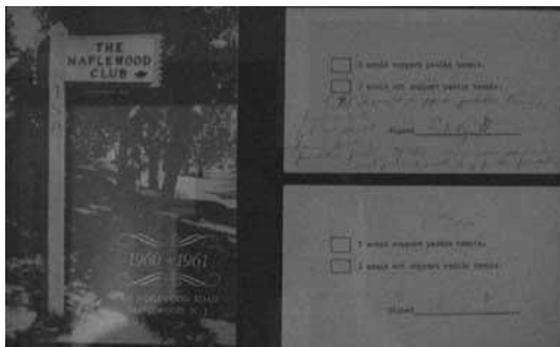
The first of several Billy Talbert Days was held in 1956 and featured exhibitions by Davis Cup players. Interest in the game, as evidenced by the membership growth, led the Trustees to finally put Court 4 in playing condition. The next year Talbert played Don Budge in an exciting exhibition.

The Married Doubles Tournament began in 1957. Two years later, the limited tennis memberships were discontinued, and tennis dues were set at \$32. In 1962 the Trustees purchased a silver bowl to list the men's singles winner — the first name listed was Bill Winslow. Three years later a comparable bowl was donated for the women's singles winner, Joan Perrine being the first.

Henry Fagan reigned as Men's Singles champion for 12 years from 1965-1976. When the Men's Masters was introduced in 1986, Henry was its initial winner. The same year, Mary Lynott Bolderman won the initial Women's Masters title. At first the Masters were for those over 40, but this was changed a few years later to members over 50.

We can find just a few members who won three or more titles in one year's fall tournaments: Joan Perrine 1964, Harriet Stokes 1972, Lenore Antinozzi 1979, Chuck Faig 1988, Janet Faig 1993, Jim O'Brien 1995 and Sandy French 1999 each won three, while Sandy French in 1997 and Mike Shannon in 1998 each won four titles.

Bowling



Tennis interest waned in the 1920s, but bowling, billiards and pool remained very popular. In 1920, an addition was built on the west side of the clubhouse that contained two alleys in the basement and the side room on the main floor that includes the current bar. Automatic pinsetters were installed at some point, but they had so many problems that they were removed in 1929. The alleys were then dependent on pin-boys (and pin-girls?) until 1965, when used Brunswick automatic pinsetters were again installed. At that time, the alleys were rebuilt with new lighting and paneling. Interest was strong until the late 1980s, when it waned in part because of increasing mechanical problems with the pinsetters. These were retrofitted in 1993, but bowling never caught on again, and in 2001 the bowling area was converted into storage and office space.

As an indication of the level of activity at the peak, in 1968 there were 2 men's, 3 women's, a mixed and a children's league. In the 1970s, there was a regular Friday night couples bowling program, a league for teens and a league for "juniors," plus frequent special events like father/child and candlelight bowling. Books of 10 discounted bowling tickets sold steadily, and the alleys were the scene of many family functions on weekends during the tennis "off-season."

During this period, Bob Bird, Dick Stox and Chuck Koch usually vied for the high average. However, Don Baxter set the Club record for a single game with a 279 ,which was subsequently shattered by Chuck Koch's awesome 288. For many years, Med Ripley was the leading woman bowler and a cup was donated in her memory by Mary Lynott Bolderman to be awarded each year to a member who had made significant contributions to bowling.

CLUB CALENDAR		
1961		
September	26	Morning Coffee
	29	Fall Meeting
October	8	Tea Dance
	21	Evening Bridge
	22	Tennis Banquet
	28	Princeton- Cornell Football Game
November	8	Dessert Bridge
	18	Thanksgiving Dance
December	16	Childrens Christmas Party
	28	Teen Age Dance
	31	New Year's Eve

The longest tenure of Stewards include:

Mr. and Mrs. Gus Fuerth, 1940-1955 (Gus passed in 1953)

Adelbert (Albert) and Maria Mayer, 1956-1962

Alfred and Ellie Vollprecht, 1970-1978 (The club allowed Albert to bowl in a men's league since he fixed the pinsetters whenever they malfunctioned)

Jim and Cynthia Hughes, 1986-1990 (Cynthia's parents, John and Bea Tolentino, were Stewards the previous year, but when John died in 1985, Cynthia took over and then married Jim in the clubhouse in 1987)

Yakovy and Lusy Shvarts, 1993-99 (both immigrated from Russia, where Yakov had been an army officer and Lusy a dentist)

Andrew and Ginea Koszyk, 1999-2002

Fun Facts

The Club newsletter in 1939 was called The Sweeper. The first edition of The Spirit was in September 1948.

The Club directory began listing Club champions in tennis, bowling and duplicate bridge (as long as it lasted) in 1965.

The President's Cup was contributed in November 1980 by Mary Lynott Bolderman in memory of Ed Lynott. At the 80th Anniversary celebration in 1996 Mary Lynott Bolderman was recognized for her extended contributions to the Club and for best representing our heart and spirit.

In 1999, air conditioning was installed in the clubhouse, making it more usable for summer activities.

