

MEMBERS OF Coronado Shuffleboard Club pitched in to build the new clubhouse on the corner of Flagler Avenue and Pine Street soon after

the club was organized 50 years ago. The club has been celebrating its jubilee year.

Coronado Shuffleboard Club celebrates golden jubilee

BY ALICE PIERCE

Conceived during the pre-war depression years when Coronado Beach was a city in its own right with a mayor and city council, Coronado Shuffleboard Club came into being in 1937.

It has been rumored that the first president of the Shuffleboard Club, Glen Evy, was at one time mayor of this beachside city. It is a matter of record that he did serve on the city council.

The founding fathers and mothers were vital, visionary, civic-minded men and women and, as it turned out, hard working.

Prior to 1937 there appears to have been planned activities within the group but no organizational structure, no officers, dues, membership roster, nor written rules. Where the group met together is something of a mystery. No one living today can supply this information. It has to be assumed that the nucleus membership was small enough to meet in homes.

During the Forties, a clubhouse of sorts was constructed and the club met together regularly for suppers. They initiated weekly dances played Bingo and gave parties for neighborhood children.

An altruistic spirit was very evident, as they raised money for charity, giving away generous amounts to such organizations as Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Cancer Society, March of Dimes, the local hospital and a Methodist Orphanage.

These funds came from among other sources, special shuffleboard games run for the specific purpose of raising money. This, of course, was after the first courts were built.

A humorous note in the old records indicates that so much money was derived from their frequent Bingo games that eventually the sheriff became curious, cast a jaundiced eye toward the club, and the members thought it prudent to quit the games for awhile.

Early statistics show that within a three-month period in 1950, \$1007.62 was collected through Bingo which was given to the aforementioned charities. Prizes were donated by local business people as well as club members.

The earliest club minutes are dated 1946. Compiling a history such as this, without benefit of records, is dependent for source information on persons of another generation who fortunately can recall having heard about events in the development of Coronado Shuffleboard Club.

Consequently there is the danger of differences in opinion and recall from person to person. Therefore the author must claim a bit of license in filling in some of the facts which are lost in the mists of time.

George Wolsfelt, president of the Southeast Volusia Historical Society, was most helpful in tracking down some of the official dates.

We find that in May 1937 the City of New Smyrna became the City of New Smyrna Beach. In 1946, the City of Coronado Beach was annexed to the City of New Smyrna Beach and Coronado city status was lost. This barrier reef has since euphemistically been called "The Beachside."

In 1937, when the group of friends decided to organize, they selected a "hole in the ground", on the corner of Flagler Avenue and Pine Street as the best location for the proposed shuffleboard courts.

Immediately ground was cleared and levelled, the men of the newly organized club doing the work themselves: no city bulldozer, no city truck, no city personnel. These men were, of course, retired and enjoying their golden years. One man in particular later minutes reveal, was then 76 years old! Eventually they constructed the early buildings and bleachers.

From early minutes we learn that shuffling was of only

minor interest to the club, although from their name we can assume that the sport had taken root and the vision would grow.

After land clearing, members put in the first two courts on the Flagler Avenue side of the lot, presumably our present numbers 1 and 2 courts.

Later two more courts were added alongside these first two. In 1950 four rear courts were added. By 1962 there were sixteen courts. The remaining four courts were added since, making the present total of 20.

The membership roster of 1949 noted 270 members with only four courts. The ratio of courts to members appears to be 1 court to 76 members.

In 1962 membership was up to 371 with 16 courts, and improved ratio of 1 to 23.

As of this writing, 1987-88 membership is 108 with 20 courts. There are three Life Members, so honored for their valued congeneration" members who have followed in the footsteps of their forebears.

In the Mid-Forties, the club voted to join the Florida State Shuffleboard Association. During those years "Friendly Games" were instituted when Coronado Shuffleboard Club challenged Deland and Orlando Clubs.

Today these weekly competitions between clubs are called Inter City Games. Orlando is no longer on our list of challengers but we play clubs as far away as Sanford and Seabreeze in Daytona and most clubs in between, each

Immediately ground was cleared and levelled, the men of the newly organized club doing the work themselves: no city bulldozer, no city truck, no city personnel. These men were, of course, retired and enjoying their golden years. One man in particular later minutes reveal, was then 76 years old! Eventually they constructed the early buildings and bleachers.

club visiting and hosting member clubs through the season.

Today special tournaments are regularly held by Volusia County and the Northern District, as well as state groups.

There is a "professional" status to be attained by winning these serious tournaments. Many Club members aspire to this status.

The first clubhouse was described as a "shock" in early recorded minutes. An old photo makes no doubt that it was actually used for meetings but probably for equipment (cues, etc.). However today it stands centrally on the bank which divides the earliest courts from the later ones, enlarged, with rest rooms, as well as storage space for the necessary accoutrement of members and it is logically called the "Cue House".

1945, a date disputed by an earlier historian, saw the acquisition of the "Assembly Hall," a real meeting place. It was described as a small corrugated metal building where cooking for the many dinners was done in a fireplace. Later a kitchen with stove, replaced the old crude cooking facilities. The Assembly Hall saw many further changes through the years.

Finally, in 1970, after much negotiation with the City Council by the then President Jim Mahon, the old original building was demolished. Shortly thereafter a new clubhouse was constructed and joined to another recently-

built building to become the present Civic Center.

In 1951, the city took possession of the building, reimbursing the club in the amount of \$1174.55.

Then in 1962 the club became part of the Recreation Department of New Smyrna Beach. Present annual member dues are \$9.50, of which \$7 goes to the Recreation Department for maintenance of building, custodian services and major court care.

A friendly relationship exists between the Recreation Department's Director Owen Davidson, and club officers.

There are many in-club tournaments during each year, some of which are a Beginner's Tournament open to new members, Memorial Tournament honoring those club members who have died during the year and a Mayor's Tournament sponsored by Mayor George Musson.

Courts are open all year in contrast to former years when games were dropped as temperatures rose and "Snow Birds" returned North. Presently summer games have moved to the cooler evening hours and we have joined with Mainland and Edgewater for a Tri City of two games a week at each club, filling up each evening with good sport and fellowship as well as keeping the level of the game at a high level.

Local businesses and banks sponsor daily play-off games. Members, too, occasionally become sponsors to honor family birthdays or anniversaries just for fun.

We enjoy the friendship of many Canadians who come down each winter from as far away as the Province of Manitoba and most of the provinces east of that.

The current president is Muriel Pomainville, a Canadian from Nova Scotia, who has lots of verve and vision initiating many new projects within the Club. Without these folks from north of the border the Club would hardly survive.

Activities for a typical month go something like this. Beside the daily games, there is a pot luck supper with an entertaining program on the third Friday of the month; the weekly travel series of Inter City games; occasional special fun days on the courts which supersede regular games; and Monday evening cribbage. These all contribute to make Coronado Shuffleboard Club a popular center on the beachside.

The talents of Coronado Shuffleboard Club have been shared through the years with other groups for the good of shufflers across the State of Florida. Here are some instances of note.

Al Baumberger, a C.S.C. president for nine consecutive years during the 50's, served also as president of the Northern District.

Marge Zwick, a present Life Member, was for many years secretary of Volusia County and Northern District organizations.

Larry Harless, Coronado Shuffleboard Club games manager, currently is treasurer of Volusia County.

The Rev. Stewart, a former minister in Coronado Community Methodist Church was an active member of the Club and each year that church observed a Shuffleboard Day.

Our Golden Jubilee Year is an exciting one and we are celebrating it in many ways.

We invite any persons who are interested to come "test" us and then become members enjoying the many facets of Coronado, Shuffleboard Club.