

History

The Newark Sportsmen's Club was chartered with the State of Illinois as a "General Not For Profit Corporation" on April 18th 1955. The local men who founded the club were; Jerald Johnson,

Lewell Anderson, Russell Johnson, Robert Anderson, Russell Holverson, all of Newark and Ernest Hegland of Millington, and Everett Morrison of Lisbon.

Their purpose was stated as "Educational, civic, social, athletic, and recreational, the promotion of conservation and the organization of hunting and fishing activities". Today as I put these notes of our history on paper, I find that we, the membership have been well served. For over 50 years the Club goals have not changed. I hope in the future others will feel the same way about "Our Club".

Here is a story from one of the club's older (Or should I say more mature?) members, Chuck Wollenweber. He has been a member for over 32 years.

The early years By Charles Wollenweber



I joined the Newark Sportsmen's Club in 1974, at the time we were campers and wanted a place where our young kids could swim and have a good time. I had shot trap at the club years before but did not know about the camping or the lake. There used to be a shed where the pavilion on the beach now stands where the lifeguard sold pop and candy bars, there was one electrical outlet in this shed. The first camper would plug into this outlet and the second camper would plug into the first campers outside outlet and so on. You can imagine what would happen if everyone would turn on the coffee pot at the same time. If you wanted the grass cut around your camper, you brought your own mower from home and cut it yourself. A lot of mowers went to mower heaven when they hit a rock in the grass. The campgrounds as we now know it was a lot smaller, when the property next door was sold, we found out that the fence had been moved quite a ways onto our property. The members helped the new owner install a new fence since we gained a lot of camping area.

In 1975 I ran for Board of Directors of the club and was elected to that position. The next year I ran for President and was elected to that post, which I held for 12 years. We started to have pancake and sausage breakfasts to make more money, we had about 150 members, each paying \$20.00 a year. Not a lot of money to do all of the things that needed to be improved. We served all of the pancakes that you could eat and two sausage patties, we had a lot of fun. We would see someone drive in and we would start to make pancakes for them. There were a lot of helpers and we had a good time. About this time we bought the old Farmall Cub tractor that was sold a few years ago, we also bought the big Ford tractor that the club just sold. Both

of these tractors were paid for with money from the breakfasts. Names like Oscar Jones, Harry Krider, Larry Black and Jess Ronning were always on the members of the month list, without their help who knows where the club would be today.

Over the years a lot of people have done a lot of work to make the Newark Sportsmen's Club what it is today. The work does not stop with the election of new officers, it carries on and on. Oscar Jones poured the concrete for the pavilion on the beach area. My brother got all of the material for the pavilion off of a job site and Harry Krider, my brother Dave and I built the pavilion. It was a much needed and used asset to the beach area. With such a small budget, we would take anything that was free, we put most of it to good use. One member donated the electrical wire that was just taken out when the electric was updated, the club bought the electric boxes. The playground equipment was donated and hauled in by members to give the kids a place to play. With such a small budget, we would take anything that people would donate.

We would have a big bonfire at night almost every weekend. It would seem that if one person would get up and bring food to the fire, then everyone else would get hungry and start to bring out food to cook over the fire. Art Sittler would drive his lawn mower down and sit around the fires with us for hours. A lot of stories were told and a lot of them were hard to believe, but we had a lot of fun and enjoyable company. One work Sunday Harry Krider, Jess Ronning and I had decided to clean up the poison ivy along the drive going down the hill to the campground. None of us had ever had poison ivy before and thought that we were immune. Well, all three of us had the worst case of poison ivy that anyone ever had. So much for being immune. It was bad at the time, but now it seems like we had a good time even when we were working.

It seems that things go in a full circle as I am now on the Board of Directors again. I have no desire to be President again, but enjoy being able to help. Now it is nice to sit back and see how others run the club. I guess that since I am the "older" Director, I am the check on the new ideas and have the knowledge and experience to help with new projects. Over the years we have made a lot of new friends and had a ton of good times. Most of my daughters were life guards at the lake and they marvel at how the young kids that they taught to swim have grown over the years. I guess, that is how it is as we grow older, I see people that were kids when I joined the club and now they have families of their own. I am glad to see the club grow and new members join at the meetings. I have tons of memories from the club and will try to pass more of them on to you at a later time.