



THE FOUNDERS OF BARRINGTON HILLS COUNTRY CLUB WANTED A CLUBHOUSE THAT WOULD REFLECT THE COUNTRY ESTATES THEY HAD BUILT. THEY ABANDONED PLANS FOR A GRAND CLUBHOUSE AND INSTEAD, FOCUSED ON SOMETHING MORE RESIDENTIAL IN NATURE—SOMETHING SPACIOUS BUT COMFORTABLE.

—“A Club in the Country”



A painting of the original Robert Work-designed clubhouse which burned down. It was rebuilt with a similar architectural style and the addition of fireproof materials.

BARRINGTON HILLS COUNTRY CLUB CELEBRATES ITS *Centennial*

The club in the country has offered its members wonderful times as a home away from home, as well as sanctuary through world wars, recessions, and most recently, a global pandemic.

by *Lisa Stamos*

THE HISTORY OF Barrington Hills Country Club is beautifully documented in a large, 164-page hardcover book titled, “A Club in the Country.” We asked its author, Patty Dowd Schmitz, to share her perspective on the Club.

“Barrington Hills Country Club is a foundational and historic organization in the Barrington area,” Schmitz said. “In the 1920s, it was the epicenter of the social structure in the Barrington ‘countryside,’ which had become a destination for many industrial-age businessmen who wished to move out of the city and back to their roots by establishing gentlemen’s farms in country locations. The wide-open spaces of Barrington Hills and the low-key spirit of the Club lured many families to our area who might otherwise have settled on the North Shore or in Lake Geneva, which had preceded

Barrington as centers of country life at that time. One hundred years later, the Barrington Hills Country Club still stands as an important gathering place for those who enjoy the quieter life of Barrington, and oh, if its walls could talk—they hold many of our area’s most important stories from the past century and beyond.”

A GRAND *and* LASTING OASIS

A tall farm silo towers over the entrance at Barrington Hills Country Club. It stands as a reminder of the late 1800s and early-to-mid 1900s when the Barrington countryside was largely a patchwork of dairy farms and agricultural fields. The silo is also a nod to the dozen or so Chicago businessmen who gathered in the summer of 1921 after a dinner party to discuss the



formation of a country club in the Barrington countryside—offering a way to bring them back to their roots and get them out of the grimy city. The club would be near their gentleman farms and look much like their countryside estate homes.

Since then, Barrington Hills Country Club's membership has survived a fire that burned down its clubhouse in 1931, with its leadership remaining vigilant that the architecture of the rebuilt clubhouse remain the same. For 10 decades, the Club has been successfully transitioned from one board of directors to the next. It has remained a constant through world wars, changing social times, and suburban sprawl. Today, with a 100-year anniversary coming up, members are reminded how important their Club is and how well it serves them—through all the good times and most recently, the turbulence of a pandemic that began in early 2020.

This September an exciting celebration will take place Club members to gather at their oasis. We asked a few of them to share their thoughts about Club life and the Centennial.

JUDY FREEMAN, *Board of Directors, Centennial Planning Committee*

Why do you feel the club has survived in a changing world?

I have observed changes the Club has made over time to accommodate new interests of members and to continually upgrade and enhance the Club's features. So, while they have worked to enhance the Club over time, the underlying stability of the membership and the value of the Club to its members and the greater community has remained very stable.

Why you are a member?

We live less than five minutes away from the Club, and it offers great golf, tennis, paddle, and junior programs. We did not consider joining anywhere else given the special quality of the golf course and what the Club had to offer.

At this point in our lives with our kids out of the house, we enjoy mostly golf and paddle, and of course dining. It's a treat to be able to bring friends for paddle and dinner, for example, and not have to prepare as if you were entertaining at home. It's like a second home but there's no housework.

Tell us about the Centennial plans!

I was a little nervous to be part of the centennial committee as I am a terrible party planner, but my experience has been much more than that. The September 4 gala has received an overwhelming response from the members and will be an epic party. I'm also very fond of the logos created for our centennial and would love to find a way to snag one of the centennial logo golf flags that adorn the course. I might have to settle for ordering some centennial logo gear from the pro shop.

DAVID BUCKLEY, *Member, Centennial Planning Committee*

Barrington Hills Country Club has thrived for the past 100 years as the Club has continued to be managed and operated based upon the principles of the founders—a few of which were a membership of



people within the Barrington community—to not incurring debt and not having set tee times so the members know they always have access. The past presidents and directors have operated the Club in a consistent fashion with a long-term focus consistent with these principles.

Melissa and I joined the club in 2007. My Great-grandfather joined the Club a year after it was founded, and I was the first member to join since he did. Melissa and I joined BHCC as we wanted to be part of a club community for our entire lives and wanted to play a golf course that we knew we would never get tired of playing. With no houses or distractions on the golf course, it is a sanctuary to spend time with family and friends away from our busy lives.

We have used the Club primarily for golf, tennis, and paddle. The excellent food and varied dining options of the dining room, pub room, and patio and the friendly atmosphere make BHCC our primary dining out option and we consider it the best restaurant in town. The lifelong relationships that we have built with other members are some of our closest friendships and the overall community of members is wonderful.

With the challenges of the pandemic, the Centennial Plans are focused around a spectacular gala event to be held on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Friday and Saturday are the end of summer member golf tournaments. The event is black tie-optional and we are expecting more than 300 members to participate in a wonderful night. A large tent has been rented and an excellent high-end band (Jesse's Girls) has been secured that will help make the Centennial Gala a night of community and great food and dancing, hopefully the best event that BHCC has had in years.

SCOTT STAHR, *Member, Club Secretary*

I've enjoyed the magic of Barrington Hills Country Club for more than 50 years. My parents, Jean and Fran Stahr, joined in 1969. As I more fully realized later, this was a major life event for them. My father had grown up in a farm town in Central Illinois and my mother in an industrial city in Wisconsin. BHCC was rarified air for them, my sister Amy, and me.

As I also realized later on, this was a major life event for me. I was immediately enrolled in the Junior Golf program to get me out of Mom's





hair, and then all of a sudden I had a dozen new friends, many of whom I have to this day, as well as knowledge of a game that I would enjoy my entire life. Wow.

Thursdays were the highlight of the summer with golf lessons and then being turned loose to play the course. And oh, did we play. All day long, until dark. Sometimes after. With “Dusty Roads” on the pool deck to sustain us.

But this time I spent at the Club wasn’t just about the game—as I’ve come to recognize—golf teaches you life lessons way beyond sport technique. BHCC provided me the environment to learn how to be a responsible person, respect others, deal with adults, and still have fun. What a great thing for some punk kid to be exposed to.

But I digress. Without question, the Club has been for me an enduring oasis of constancy, safety, and friendship through various tumultuous personal, professional, and societal events.

Most recently, we have all been navigating through the tensions and uncertainties of a worldwide pandemic. Without the Club (and by “Club” I mean not just the wonderful golf course and other facilities, but the kindly and caring members and welcoming staff), I candidly wonder how I would have coped. Scary times made manageable by my extended Club family.

As the pandemic numbers worsened over a year ago, many were concerned, including the Directors of the Club, about the future and the fate of the Club. Is it extraneous? Will people withdraw into their cocoons? More broadly, will Clubs become passé?

Well, it appears the Club has weathered this storm, just as it has endured prior crises, including world wars and deep recessions. The membership remains devoted. We are in the midst of a



steady flow of area residents looking to become part of the Club family. The values of the club that I learned early on have, again, endured.

Barrington Hills Country Club has proven its resilience again and again. In this, BHCC’s Centennial year, go my deepest thanks to all who came before in creating and providing wise stewardship for something I hold so dear. U