

A Trip Down Memory Lane. By Pete Morais

Hope everyone enjoyed their summer and welcome to another big season!

Our Sock Hop concluded in April and that was Sandy's last dance and since I won't be running for another term in November, this will be my last article as president and I thought I would take a trip down "Men's Club memory lane" with you.

I have been on the Men's club board some 13 years and President for 10 and so much has happened over the years. Some of you may remember when Bonnie Heidenreich, was Entertainment Chairperson and things changed overnight for the Men's Club when she and husband Jim moved upstate. Bonnie and her committee had done a great job, for many years, putting on some 6 dances throughout the season. When she left the majority of our entertainment was gone and no one wanted to take over the job and it just went away. So what were we going to do with the loss of all those dances?? Always great entertainment!!

Well, the Men's Club and other committees stepped up and picked up the slack by taking over the dances Bonnie and her committee had performed for years. We picked up the Halloween Dance, St. Patrick's Dance and the April spring dance. Prior to that, our events consisted of the Octoberfest dinner dance, a January occasion, and Casino Night. So we doubled our calendar overnight. The Valentine Dance was picked up by the Theater group for a couple years, then another group stepped up and now it's no longer Valentines. The summer entertainment group is now putting on a show in that calendar spot. Bonnie had the New Year's Eve dance which continued for a while by the golf association , but even that went away for some 6 years. Thankfully it was revitalized last year by Olivia Masrtrobuoni's beautification committee, which we were all glad to see happen. They did a nice job ringing in last year and this year promises to be another hit.

The taking on of 3 more dances created more obligations and additional work for us. The early years found Sandy with pretty much all of the decorating responsibilities and most of the theme presentations. For years I was making our flyers and tickets and Marie Fowler was our ticket salesperson. It was a lot of work but we had a lot of fun, many good times, a number of sleepless nights and fond memories, recollection's we will always cherish. It was unbelievable how much help we had and how much work was performed by these volunteers. Marie did a great job selling tickets all by herself, and it was much harder when we had 2 events going in the same month. Today we have Anna Clark & Sue Baughman selling tickets for our performances and they work wonderfully with each other. We are so fortunate to have them on our team. Many thanks to Marie, Anna & Sue for their tireless work for the Men's Club.

Casino night, which took up the entire ballroom and foyer was always a very popular money maker which required over 100 workers to make it happen. Bob Foote got me

started chairing it and I passed it along to Jack Crotty who worked hard to keep it going. Tom Hare spent a great deal of time preparing and distributing tickets for game night. Sal Carrera and his crew worked the kitchen. We needed people to set up all the workers, the gambling tables and the finances kept our treasurer and his crew busy all night long. So much work! Eventually no one wanted to take charge of it and reluctantly it went by the wayside. Every board member, their wives and many volunteers were very busy working all evening on Casino night. We put in many hours to make Casino night work, again these were more of our happy times.

A January event we dubbed Mexican Night is not joyfully remembered and quite frankly we all still want to forget it. The evening started out like no other. The stage took on an air of old Mexico with lively Mexican music filling the hall as 5 Mariachi's in their colorful Mexican garb stretched across the stage playing their hearts out. I never seen people so excited.

As they entered the hall, they began dancing. It felt so good and we thought how nice it was to see all these happy faces. We had a sellout crowd, but joy quickly turned into sorrow when it was time to eat and the caterer ran out of food with still 100 unfed and unhappy hungry people waiting to eat. When you have a nightmare you wake up and it eventually goes away. We could not wake up from this one. Bad music, you can put up with, but running out of food is a recipe for failure. In this case the music was great but not being able to feed so many people spelt disaster. It took a long time to get over this one and quite frankly I don't think we ever did.

There and then we decided to no longer trust an outside caterer. We would continue giving our catering business to the Pub and quite frankly, they have never let us down. At the time Darrell, the Pub Manager, told me he could have given us Mexican food, but we wanted authentic. What a mistake that was. Since then we stayed in our own back yard and went to Darrell and the pub staff for our food. We told Darrell running out of food was not an option and we always had good food and plenty of it. If you read this Darrell, I hope you are doing well and want to thank you for everything you did for the Men's Club. It was a pleasure working with you. All I hear about our new Pub Manager is very good. Hopefully she will uphold the tradition we have become accustomed to.

Were you at our Luau? What an extravaganza that was. A gala to remember! First it was drinks around a brightly decorated pool. We must have had 30 people working with us on decorations, setting up tables, 300 rented chairs and props. Among other festive presentations, we had live exotic birds on display for picture taking. After a bit we went into the clubhouse where a delicious Hawaiian Ham dinner prepared by John Marino and his crew was served. We fed 300 people in the clubhouse then escorted them back to their poolside tables where we spent an evening being serenaded by a Hawaiian quartet with Hula dancers and fire dancers performing a festive show on a large rented stage located where our big Tiki Hut now stands. That was one of the finest of many great nights to remember. I recall being very nervous about this show. It cost us

\$4500.00 just for the music and authentic dancers, plus the cost of the stage, the food and 300 chairs, I thought we would go broke. Lou Bostic kept telling me don't worry everything will be OK and, you know what, Lou was right. I never doubted Lou after that. What a guy!!

Over the years, we brought you some very entertaining shows, like tributes to Neal Diamond, The Atlantic City Boys. Jimmy Travis, The Marlins to name a few who provided great music. We brought you many good comedians and singers as well.

Our Halloween Dances are always a blast. We finally handed it over to Dick Loubier and most recently to Tom Clark who have done a wonderful job.

The April events we had were always dinner dances, with delicious food, and here are some of the themes you may remember. Dancing with the Stars, where Sandy had Dick Loubier, Ronda Owens and Fred Weber seated at a table, on the stage, judging a dance contest being performed by 6 very capable couples. This was a fun night and the winners, Nolene & Ernie went home with a homemade Mirror Ball Trophy for their efforts.

In 2013, we had a disco dance which featured a John Travolta Dance contest where some 20 men were shaking it up to win a prize of a free one hour massage. This was a special affair, Sandy called it "Stay-in Alive". This was a takeoff of the Saturday Night Fever Movie.

Yes, another one of her great ideas came to life as a smash hit.

Al Olson, brought us an April Dinner Dance he called "Pine Lakes 33903", a special tribute to our residents. The Del Prado's entertained for our dancing pleasure. This was another wonderful evening.

Remember the Survivor dinner dance? We walked into a jungle of animal's lurking in a homemade forest, featuring a waterfall flowing in the entrance way and nothing got wet. The evening featured fire dancers and we even had a visit from my next door neighbor, Dan Murphy sporting

a giant gorilla outfit. You could hear the ladies screaming all over the place! A few guys backed away as well.

Since then the fire marshal has stopped us from blocking the exit doors and having fire dancers in the hall. Imagine that! A survivor meal of BBQ Ribs served by the Pub was delicious. At the intermission we had all those who had survived a life threatening episode come up to the front of the stage where we gave tribute to them. There were ladies and men accepting a big round of applause from an audience who was glad to have avoided what their wonderful friends had endured. Their caregivers were similarly

asked to come up and be recognized. Another large group came up to stand by their mates as they had done so many times before. An additional round of applause ensued. This was truly a Special evening.

This was probably the most touching event I have gone through in my tenure as president. I am so glad we did it because you all certainly deserve the recognition for your battle with whatever it was you went through!! Howard Harrison said this was the most emotional and stirring episode he has ever witnessed at Pine Lakes.

How could we have known that Sandy would have had to have open heart surgery for a Tumor in her heart the following year? Another survivor! We thank God and ask him to continue to bless all of our Pine Lakes residents. It seems as if at this point of our lives, we are all survivors.

The GOLDEN YEARS dinner dance was twofold. At our first break we honored our past Presidents. The theme was a reminder of our valued golden years. Here Sandy had a lot of help from Cher Carrera with acquiring various decorations and from countless others who helped decorate the foyer and the ballroom. Cher's neighbor, Faye Duston, lent us some very nice pieces of furniture and antiques from her home. Antiques from the Carrera household, dressed up the foyer to look like a chamber reminiscent of a Pine Lakes room of the past. The ballroom had a golden touch which would have made King Midas jealous!

Joe Garbino one of our active residents, along with his brothers, known as the G-Botts performed their 50's & 60's music reminiscent of days of old. Ray Sloane, who since has moved to Texas to be with his daughter, painted a 4x8 foot sign with sparkling gold lettering which commemorated the existence of our Men's Club from 1989 until 2010. This white and gold mural was hung up against the black curtain as the backdrop on the stage. A silent reminder of the many golden years we've had here at Pine Lakes.

On the big screen TV in the ballroom, years before we bought the four 70 inchers we have now, a DVD was playing some pictorial memories of past Men's Club events as the people entered. Pictures, set to music, showing us some of the many people who have enjoyed themselves at our more recent Men's Club activities. A Golden Night to Remember.

We gave tribute to Past Presidents for their years of service & keeping the Men's Club alive. We started our ceremony with senior member **Jim Walsh** who was president in 1992.

Paul Dwyer who could not be at the dance, since he had a stroke leaving him unable to get around as well as he would like, succeeded Jim as president in 1993. After Paul, there was NO Men's Club for the next four years. Bob Knell and others breathed new life into a renewed Men's Club at their own expense and restored it once again.

Bob Knell was Vice President for several years. In February of 1999, Bob became president. Bob was an active board member for many, many years prior to his becoming president and served for many years afterwards. Bob can be found each month actively attending our meetings and selling 50/50 tickets for us. Good to have you with us Bob. Thanks for your dedicated service.

November of 1999 saw **Lou Bostik** get elected president. Lou served 2 years as president until 2000. Lou served many years before becoming President then was continuously reelected as a board member until his last term ended in 2007, when Lou decided to hang it up. However, Lou is still here today always available whenever we need help. Lou was a big support for me when I was first elected President in 2005, Lou was on the board with me and was my mentor.

Lou always gave me the right advice which was and still is greatly appreciated. Thank you Lou for all your support for me and the Men's Club.

Larry Burkett became a member in Dec. 1998 and did not take long for him to become active in our leadership. Larry was elected to the board in 2000 then became president in November of 2001 and served until 2003. Thank you Larry.

Omer Bourque became a member in Sept. 2000, also very active, Omer was elected secretary to Larry from 2001 till 2003 when Omer was elected President. Omer served through the rough tent years during the time when Hurricane Charlie ripped up our clubhouse leaving us to make the best of a bad situation. Omer kept us going with meetings in the Pub and in a parking lot tent. Omer was well liked and always had a smile on his face. Many thanks to Omer.

After the rough years were over, as Vice President, it was my turn to be President. I was very fortunate to have such principled men standing at my side as we carried the Men's Club banner for the last ten years. I remember the many times Sandy & I sat with Vice President Vince Principe and his wife Janet, discussing the pros and cons of issues that came up. Vince was truly an honorable, gentleman of impeccable integrity who always had a good way of finding answers to some stubborn problems I came up with. Vince was and still is sorely missed. Sharing views with and getting opinions from my vice presidents Vince, Jack Crotty and Tom Minahan will always be cherished and much appreciated. I was so fortunate to serve with them, and was always able to rely on all of the board members on my team.

A big Thank You to all our past presidents both living and those who have passed on. Let us not forget these prior officers and Directors, who worked so hard side by side with their Presidents, to keep this great organization going and growing. It goes without saying that a president cannot and does not, do it alone!! Like they say, "It takes a village".

We gave our Country Hoedown a twist. Cowboy hats were given to the guys and gals at the door, later, another great meal. Afterwards, we danced to some country music. After that we had a square dance caller give lessons and we square danced during intermission. This went back and forth all night! The Ballroom entrance looked like a saloon. Ray Rondeau in his cowboy garb played his honky-tonk piano as we entered the hall. You were a big hit Ray!

On the front of the old big TV was a wooden billboard placard with the pictures of the 9 board members done up as desperados on WANTED posters. They did look like outlaws! I see those hats around now and then, they still look pretty good. Another different but fun evening.

Were you here when we had our "Mardi Gras Meets ST. Patrick's Day"? Everyone was given a mask to wear. Every one masquerading from each other. What fun! St. Patrick Day Dances were always big here. Sellout crowds were the norm from the beginning. When Sandy took it over we added Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinners to the mix. This continued when Tom Minahan and John Brown chaired this dance. John added Pot Roast as a menu choice. You may remember, our last Patrick's day dance sold out before 9:00am of the first day of sales. Once more we had 350 very happy people to see the Gatlins and enjoy another rockin evening.

Two special shows performed by Frank & Linda Fazzioli, another of our talented Pine Lake residents, were special just for us. Their Patsy Cline show, a smash success, was donated to the Men's Club and this actually gave us a big financial boost we needed at the time. Frank was happy to do the show absolutely free for the Men's Club. We then booked a second variety show of his which was so popular it ran for 2 days. We owe Frank, Linda and their singers a big debt of gratitude. They were and still are extremely talented!! Thank you so much!

Over the years we've had 3 or 4, as I remember, made Bingo a very enjoyable night out for our Bingo lovers. Dale Heine began by borrowing money from the Men's Club and quickly repaid the thousands of dollars in startup money. I think Bob Foot took over after Dale passed and then Ted Krenn ran the operation for the next few years.

Recently, Dick Loubier has taken on our Bingo Night. He's doing a bang-up job of not only giving away a lot of money every Wednesday evening in season, but bingo is also responsible for a big part of our income. His crew of some 25 volunteers deserve a pat on the back for the job they do. Janet Principe and Barbara Harwood's kitchen prowess have people who don't even play bingo stop into their Bingo Café to enjoy a sandwich or jumbo hot dog, soda or ice cream treat every Wednesday evening.

Our vice-president, Tom Minahan is responsible for our most recent surge of financial success with the Home Show. Tom had this brilliant idea, and with a great deal of work requiring many volunteers, has created income beyond expectations. Tom wants

another one next February when you can look forward to our 3rd annual Home Show. Well done Tom!

Looking back at my tenure as president, we had about \$8,000.00 when I started. Actually that was a lot of money back then, considering the few events we put on each season.

Our funds have increased immensely, since then, and we have given back to our community, donated to various charities on an annual basis, all from the money provided when you support our events. None of this is possible without your patronage. Don't get me wrong, we didn't always pay for all of the following items by ourselves, we've had a lot of financial help donated by all of our Pine Lakes committees and management.

We built Five (5) Tiki huts around the pool. Don't you just love them? They are an impressive addition to our Community. It's so tropical looking! I feel like I'm at a resort when I'm in the spa looking at the surroundings. Today they are in need of repair. I'm told management has requested money be put in the budget to refurbish them in 2016. Can't come soon enough. They are getting shabby!

Long before the Tiki huts, we erected, above ground speakers for background music around the pool. We've had speakers around the pool as long as I can remember, but the old speaker cords were being cut and ground speakers around the pool kept getting stolen. It was time to make these vandals work by climbing the stainless steel slippery poles if they wanted to keep robbing us of our poolside music. Once again many groups helped pay for this project.

We put venetian blinds for all the windows in the clubhouse to help defuse the sunlight for the card players. They also help keep the sunlight from intruding when we have Shows, Plays, dances or other performances. We added the 50 inch TV in the Living Room.

Every weekday morning you can see residents exercising before videos on one of the four 70 inch TV's we added in the ballroom. TV's were added mainly to improve Bingo play.

Beautification helps their cause by using them in the summer for movie night.

You may not have seen it but we installed a video camcorder on the back wall in the ballroom, it is mostly used by the theater and chorus groups. We used it a few time when the candelighter kids were here and we put their unsuspecting faces up on the big TV sets. They sure were surprised to see themselves on TV! Lots of giggles.

Without the 11 overhead fans we put in the ballroom and card rooms, we would have a lot less control of the comfort we enjoy in these rooms. With maintenance labor, put stage lights, manageable without a light board, and an overhead ball light in the ballroom to enhance the atmosphere at our dances. We helped the bocce court when they wanted their canopy to help shade the sun. It looks great.

We bought 44 chairs and 4 tables to enhance the tiki huts. It's hard to say what happened to all those chairs but in time I understand they will be replaced. We bought the new chairs in the ballroom, which I must say look very nice and do provide a comfy seating for our pleasure. I want to thank all of you for the financial help we received by way of the chair fund. When it was all said and done we wound up paying for about half of the \$11,000.00 cost as a result of the various committee & management donations.

The Pub also benefitted from this purchase when some of the gold chairs from the clubhouse replaced the grey chairs of old. Seems like I've seen some of those grey chairs in the Sandtrap at Lake Fairways. They prospered as well! I think the gold chairs also helped brighten up the pub. Speaking of the Pub, We put in a new noise resistant ceiling which did make a huge difference in the sound levels in the pub. We also were responsible for the new tables in the pub. At our suggestion we went 50/50 on the cost with management, thanks to Frank Young who was acting manager at the time. He said he would find the money somewhere and he did. Getting rid of the back yard variety picnic tables we had for 20 years was a big improvement. I estimate we have spent in excess of \$100,000.00 on improvements to our community in the past 10 years. This is something you and I can be very proud of.

We have returned to incorporating some of the activities started by our founding fathers. We take bus trips to watch Miami & Tampa Bay football games and the Minnesota Baseball games. These all setup very professionally for us by our good friend and resident Moe Klingele at reduced rates to our members. These are fun times for our members and will continue.

You won't want to miss our October Meeting. In addition to free food we will be discussing an evening dinner cruise on the Captain JP we are putting on in March.!!

I believe the wives appreciate the free food at our membership meetings, it's a night mama doesn't have to cook. Providing free food at our meetings has increased the attendance by 40%. The membership has also increased a great deal in the last year.

I thank Len Gorman, Jack Crotty, Dick Loubier and all who devoted themselves to erecting our magnificent Veterans Memorial. We are all so very proud and thankful for your involvement in this effort. The Men's Club along with all Pine Lakers stand tall with you on the fulfillment of this monument dedicated to our service men & women.

I am proud to say we have purchased a brand new trailer for "Wake up America". They do an outstanding job and our members take pride in assisting in the distribution of food to the needy 7 days a week, all year long. A big thank you to Larry Dow, their president, and his crew. all hard working Men's club members.

It's fun to look back and no one has more fond memories than Sandy and I. We will always remember the board members and their wives who gave their unfailing support to the Men's Club, not asking what am I going to get out of it, but giving unselfishly of themselves to provide the people of this community, the best entertainment we could put together and they will continue to do so. We already have some great shows for you as far out as "The Beatles Show" in February 2017.

We have some exceptional acts you won't want to miss!! On November 21st, we have Comedian Homer Noodleman and Class act Jimmy Mazz returning to our stage!!

We have purchased, and in November we will erect, a brand new 12 pierce fiberglass professionally painted Nativity Set replacing our rather beat up old wooden one. It's beautiful.

It takes a certain talent to makeup flyers and tickets for our occasions. In the past Al Olson did a bang up job in this department. Currently board member Steve Lagrou provides them and as you can see by his work, we are in very capable hands moving forward.

A special credit to the photographers, Lou Ackley, Bob Williams and Chuck Sawicki for always being there to give us visual memories of our happy times. You guys are great!

To the management & maintenance personnel, I have enjoyed working with all of you through the good times and the not so good, but I want to acknowledge your help & thank you for it.

I appreciate all of you who helped setup our hall for so many events over the years. The balloon girls & guys who set up the tables and chairs, and the decorator assistants. A great crew!

My gratitude to the Texas holdem workers Pete Williams, Sal Carrera, Janet Principe, they work every Monday year round and are there for our tournaments as well.

The Pancake Breakfast workers over the years led by Sal Carrera, Dave Rothoff, & now Tom Clark and their jolly workers. They are always there to serve up a tasty breakfast the first Saturday of the month in season.

My appreciation to Jermaine and Guy Troiano, Howard Harrison and their Whispering Pines staff is beyond words. They have put up with so many of my narratives, such as

this one. Article changes I would on occasion ask them to make and they would always deliver for me. They do a magnificent service for our community. We are indeed fortunate to have them working for us. Thank You so much.

To all of the **past and present officers and their wives**, you have our heartfelt gratitude. Sandy & I thank you for your time and efforts. You have made our job so much easier. There you have it, just some of my many memories in a rather large capsule.

God Bless, keep in touch and we will see you around the neighborhood.