

A Very Brief History of Newcomers Club of Greater Chapel Hill

The first yearbook in our membership archives is dated 1992-1993. It informed us that Newcomers was originally known as the Welcome Wagon Club of Chapel Hill/Carrboro, NC.

The yearbook reported dues at \$9 for a single membership and \$12 for a couple. Memberships were open to “newcomers to the area in the last six-month period, others changing residences, the newly engaged and mothers to be.”

Active memberships were for three years starting on June 1 and Alumni were subsequently able to join the “AfterWards Club.”

General meetings were held four times a year at various locations. Coffees were held on the third Wednesday of the month at homes of members, and evening socials were held three times a year: a potluck picnic in September, a holiday dinner in December, and an annual barbeque in May.

A monthly newsletter went out to all members with news of the interest group activities. Many interest groups remain the same today: book review (Book Club), luncheons (Women Who Lunch and Men Out to Lunch), potluck suppers (Lite Bites and Lite Bites for Singles), golf, and various daytime tours. Other interest groups included tennis, bridge, pinochle, needlecraft, antiques and working together (a group for working members).

The club supported Community Information Day held in the fall at the University Mall where area non-profit organizations rented tables and provided information on volunteer services available to club members. The Welcome Wagon Club also supported the WUNC-TV fundraising efforts each spring. Membership included 58 couples and 41 singles for a total of 157 active memberships.

The 1996-1997 Membership Directory was the first yearbook titled Newcomers Club of Greater Chapel Hill, NC. Membership was open to anyone moving to the area within the past twenty-four months. Dues were \$20 per household.

General meetings were held every month in the homes of members. New member coffees were held twice a year in the homes of the Board members and a monthly newsletter continued to be sent to all members. Three major socials were planned each year: a dinner in October, brunch in December, and the annual “pig pickin” in May. The club also continued to sponsor Community Information Day in the fall at the University Mall for non-profit organizations and supported both Interfaith Council Social Services and WUNC-TV fundraising efforts each year.

The 2000-2001 Membership Directory stated that dues were \$25 per household and an official Alumni Group had been formed. Club functions continued to be monthly general meetings, new member coffees, club socials, a monthly newsletter, philanthropy and service. Interest groups continued to be similar to our current groups with bridge and sports taking more active roles. This directory was the first to mention a “singles” interest group. Membership included 83 couples and 33 singles, for a total of 199 active members.

The last Newcomers Club Directory in print form was dated 2009-2010. The club then had an email address and our members' email addresses. Dues were \$50 per household and \$30 for singles. Four all-club get-togethers were listed as social and three were educational in nature! Informal get-togethers were held on the first Monday of the month at the Spice Street Restaurant in University Mall and members received electronic invitations to all-member events. Interest groups included a non-fiction book group, dining at the stars, and a dinner and theater group.

In 2012, Newcomers began working with ClubExpress to develop a website, www.newcomersofchapelhill.org, and put all of the club functions and information online. The first online member registrations in our database were from 2012.

Membership directories for 2017-2018 were on the web and Newcomers' one-page brochures were distributed to the community. Monthly "Meet and Greet" were held on the first Monday of the month at the historic Carolina Inn, and interest groups continued under the direction of volunteer leaders doing much planning to ensure all activities were worthwhile and enjoyable for all members. As of January 2018, membership included 66 family memberships and 83 singles for a total of 215 active members.

Newcomers has continued to increase membership every year, with a high in 2019 of over 300! 2020 was a quiet year with our activities severely restricted by COVID-19, but with many activities moving online via Zoom.

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