

Hub. Home. Haven.

Hello, Greensboro Country Club

It sped by in a blink, a flash, and suddenly, somehow, we've only memories: an over-the-top gala, a handsome pictorial history, and charming, oversized, black-and-white photographs lining the halls, depicting the way we were.

Blink: 100 years in the life of Greensboro Country Club.

Like most organizations — a school, a bank — the club originated with a need in a void. In 1909, a Greensboro resident visiting Maine became intrigued with a game the locals played “with a shiny stick to hit a small hard, rubber ball just as far as they can. Then they try to find the ball and hit it into a hole.” That game was golf, and the Greensboro Golf Club began with 35 members and a rudimentary nine-hole pitch-and-putt course downtown. By 1911 the club was incorporated, and charter members acquired 350 forested acres out in the country, in what was a bold, unheard-of enterprise vision at the time: a residential neighborhood development built entirely around a golf course. (Grazing sheep helped control course maintenance costs.) Today, golfers on the Donald Ross golf course play on fairways and greens in the shadows of both stately mansions, ranch homes, and appealing cottages of the Irving Park neighborhood, which itself has received the National Register of Historic Places recognition.

In the 30 years following, Greensboro, along with the rest of the nation, would weather two World Wars and the Great Depression. With peacetime, and the baby boom of the 50s, the club expanded, incorporating amenities and offerings central to growing families — pool, tennis courts, dining, and every kind of entertainment imaginable. The club became a “home away from home.” Meanwhile, back on the (literal) farm, Carlson Farms Country Club was founded on what had been a dairy farm in northwest Greensboro, boasting its own golf course, pool, and clubhouse. In 1969, the two entities merged, and today, GCC members have multiple options for dining, entertainment, and play, including two golf courses, two pools, and indoor/outdoor tennis courts. More than four decades on, and though Greensboro has grown exponentially in area, GCC members still refer affectionately to the two locales as “in-town” and “the farm.”

The century mark of 1909 to 2009 has come and gone — though both the club logo and a dining room name hearken back to the date — and with it, six iterations of clubhouses. Club history and institutional memory are an important facet of Greensboro Country Club, meaning that a long tradition of excellence informs every decision and offering, be it an item on a menu or long-range plans. But resting on laurels, and because “it's always been done that way,” has no place in GCC's practices.

Take a day, any day. From 4:00 a.m. to the wee hours of the (next) morning, something is happening at Greensboro Country Club. In the Fitness Center, diehards are pumping iron and pounding the treadmills in pre-dawn. Group classes begin at 6:00 a.m. Tennis leagues are warming up while children from 6 weeks to 8 years are settling with childcare, craft projects, and pinball. Hot dogs and sandwiches are being prepared in the Halfway House on the Irving Park course; at the farm, a couple is meeting with event staff to plan an unforgettable rehearsal dinner. If it's Wednesday, the in-town kitchen is setting out untold dozens of eggs and pounds of bacon for the weekly “B for D” (breakfast

for dinner) supper, a go-to social gathering for pre-teens and entire families. The club's own van is readying parking lot transport for a hundred guests who'll be descending at noon for a book club author's appearance. And it's not even lunch yet. Still, if you're finishing up a round—or a sauna visit — with an urge for a Bloody Mary, it's ready for you at one of 5 in-town casual dining venues, including a seasonal outdoor bar, an al fresco space above the fray, terrace fire pit, and, year-round, a stunning view of the rolling golf course.

Father-daughter dances. Build-your-own gingerbread house parties. Hay rides and a Halloween carnival. Boat relays, poolside mixers, aqua aerobics, swim team competitions, and supervised hijinks for the three big holidays of summer mean the pools are a constant hive of warm-weather bustle. In winter, the best hills in town and a dedicated staff means entire families hit the slopes with sleds, fueled with grilled hamburgers and steaming cocoa. Tennis, golf, and fitness professionals and trainers furnish lessons and sessions, whether you have a four-year-old with a tennis obsession, or you've always wondered what a Pilates reformer is. Member-Guest and Member-Member weekends are scheduled annually for golf, tennis, and paddleboard enthusiasts who hanker for competition that comes with prizes, accolades—and a visit from your old roommate. No matter the season, menus are updated to reflect current trends and local availability of ingredients.

Substitute “convenience” for one of those C's in the Greensboro Country Club logo. Thanks to smartphone apps, a twitter feed, and a website, members can check on—and register for— every activity that day or the months ahead. “Convenience” equals on-site shops for apparel and equipment. “Convenience”, when it comes to Thanksgiving and Christmas, is just a swipe to order a ready-for-pickup turkey dinner (or simply the to-die-for dressing and sticky buns.) Take-out from the Family Grille puts an end to frantic weeknights or lazy Sundays. “Convenience” means that office party, philanthropic fundraiser, bridge luncheon, dinner for a dozen, 40th birthday cocktail buffet, bar mitzvah celebration, or wedding reception is a turn-key affair, organized and executed with elan and experience by event coordinators who've seen it all and are looking for the next new thing.

If only space allowed... Easter egg hunts, visits with Santa. Super Bowl parties, New Year's extravaganzas. House-made macaroons and short-rib flatbreads. Bands, balls, speakers, and a bartender who'll caramelize an orange peel when you feel like an Old Fashioned with a little extra citrus. A toddler's swim instructor. An exercise regime specifically tailored to a teen. A Thai, Swedish, or prenatal rubdown. A secluded table with banquette seating. Staff who know your name. A hub of activity. A community within a city. A home for families. A haven from the world. Distinguished, accessible, historical, remarkable. Hello, next century. Hello, Greensboro Country Club.

To explore making memories for your family, please contact Lori Frasier at l.frasier@greensborocc.org

