



Memories Of The West Avon Community Club, Avon Connecticut

The West Avon Community Club operated for about 75 years and was the social meeting place for local families. It began about 1924 when families needed some place for summer fun and land was donated by the Burnham family. By 1925 residents sold stock to build a club house which is still standing and located directly across the road from Avon High School. Dinners, dances and games all took place here and in 1947, a 30 ft. x 60 ft. swimming pool was added. The pool was originally fed by underground spring water – talk about cooling off in the summer! A resident who used to swim there said ‘It’s a quite a unique experience –it’s cold and clean, not soupy’. He added ‘There isn’t that chemical taste or smell to the water’. By 1996 the pool was filled by the town water system.

The membership fee in 1996 was \$125 for a single resident’s fee, and \$150 for one resident plus the addition of a child for the entire summer. People could come and go as they pleased as there was a combination lock for entry by members. The pool was open from mid-June to mid-September. There were no lifeguards as parents were expected to look after their own children. One condition of membership was the volunteering on one Saturday a month to help with the pool and grounds maintenance.

During the war in a 1944 newspaper article, there was an appeal for volunteers to help at the Club. “The young men of the club are scattered from the Pacific to Europe, so there are few of them at home except the ones who are carrying on the very necessary farming of the community.” Local residents donated time to maintain the property and the pool. Some quotes from historic newspaper articles regarding the beloved summer spot are: “The Community Club represents one of the things our boys were fighting for. We know they are going to be pleased to come back and find the swimming pool all ready for them.” “The men and women who started and developed this club built character as well as a building.” “The older folks have done a magnificent piece of work during the war.”

Local citizens felt that there was a sense of the history that this place represented within the community. Stories had been passed down from earlier generations of the various social events they had attended there and enjoyed. Historic articles mention tire tub races, relay races, underwater races and retrieval games from the bottom of the pool for the kids. One humorous note regarding an egg and spoon race (on land) was that ‘owing to the current price of eggs, golf balls will be substituted for the eggs’. Imagine those folks of yesteryear seeing the prices of our eggs today! Folks from the older generation remembered Saturday nights when square dances were held as well as other events such as strawberry festivals, pot luck suppers, garden club meetings, and fire department carnivals. Other civic and political organizations used the club house as well so it was a very active community meeting place for many years.

Alas, the West Avon Community Swim and Pool Club, as it later became called, is no more due to economic factors and having been replaced by the newer Sycamore Hills Pool and Senior Center. Longtime town residents no doubt have fond memories of those pleasant summer days around the pool and the convivial evenings at the club house. The common thread gleaned from the historic articles used in the research for this article was mention of the nice people and relaxed family atmosphere at the Community Club. Unfortunately, like so many other places that have fallen into disrepair, all good things must come to an end. In 1996 the building received a new roof and new paint but the building is vacant. It is a shame to watch a physical place, that created such carefree summer memories, disintegrate over time. But the music that was played in the dance hall on those warm summer evenings still resonates in the collective consciousness of our seniors.