



NORFOLK TROUT CLUB



• 12 Baltimore Street • P.O. Box 71 • Norfolk, MA 02056 •

• **Norfolk Trout Club** •
A 50 Year History

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Norfolk Trout Club, this written history has been developed to chronicle the origination, development, evolution and enduring legacy of the Club and its members. Special thanks go out to all who contributed to this document; from long-time members whose participation and memories have kept the Club thriving, to the Board of Governors for their vision to record and preserve the many important milestones from the first 50 years.

• **The Club** •

The Norfolk Trout Club is comprised of over 100 men and women from the Greater Boston area who enjoy fly-fishing and the camaraderie of fellow fishermen. The log cabin clubhouse, wooded surroundings and three ponds create a rural retreat from the members' daily routines. In this age of computers and cellular phones, the club provides a place for quite reflection away from the obligations to employers and families, providing angling opportunities amongst fellow fly fishermen. As stated 50 years ago by the founding members, the club's mission is as follows:

“This corporation is organized and constituted for the purpose of a fishing club for advancing the skill and enjoyment of fishing and other forms of athletic sports and pastimes; to promote the standards of good conduct and social contacts; the acquirement ownership of grounds, fishing ponds, and other appropriate properties and do such things as are incidental to the attainment of the foregoing objects, and the purpose shall not include the right to apply for a license to sell alcoholic beverages.”



Through annual events such as spring and fall opening days, work weekends and family picnics, the club carries on this tradition and continues to successfully accomplish the founding members' stated mission. It is up to current and future members to ensure the club retains the qualities that draw us as often as we can to escape our day-to-day responsibilities as spouses, parents, employees and homeowners. To truly appreciate our club, we must learn about the history, how the club was formed, who were other members and how the grounds looked fifty years ago.

Fall fishing Photo circa November 1961

• *The History* •

The uniqueness of the trout club's setting, isolated from the surrounding urban sprawl, was a result of foresight and hard work by the founding members. The property was purchased through four separate land acquisitions in the 1930's. The initial purchase was made on September 17, 1934 when four parcels were acquired from George Delano by The Sportsman's Trust. The individuals representing the Trust and listed on the deeds include: John Farley of Needham, James Storrow of Brookline, and Arthur Harlow of Newton. The lots purchased included:

- 40 Acres of mowing, tillage and pasture on the Wrentham / Medway line
- 16 11/16th acres in northern Norfolk
- A tract of land in northern Norfolk
- 5 acres in northern Norfolk which was the former homestead of Almond Packard

Throughout the mid to late 1930's, The Sportsman's Trust continued to add to their land holdings in Norfolk through the following additional land acquisitions:

- 2 1/10 acre purchase from George Delano on October 22, 1934
- Another lot purchased from George Delano on April 26, 1936
- The final 55 acre parcel was purchased from Lawrence Davis on February 2, 1938

For a number of years, the land was used for hunting and fishing by members of the Sportsman's Trust. On December 22, 1943, the Sportsman's Trust was terminated and the property was transferred to the Massachusetts Fish and Game Association.

The Massachusetts Fish and Game Association created detailed rules that governed fishing on the ponds. Interestingly, the rules were not all that different than the rules that govern fishing at



the club today. Some notable differences include the permissibility of unrestricted fishing in all of the ponds during certain times of year. The middle and upper ponds were deemed fly fishing only ponds except during June, July and August when all forms of fishing were permitted. In the lower pond, year round unrestricted fishing for trout was permitted. Worm fishing was permitted in the brook above the upper pond at all times.

Stocking the Lower (Harlow) Pond, Spring 1992

Club members were permitted to harvest up to 6 trout per day, with a limit of 50 per season. If any trout were taken above these limits, the member was charged \$1.25 per pound. The members were required to keep a detailed log of all fish taken.

Members were also charged the use of boats at a rate of \$0.30 per hour or \$1.50 per day. During this time there was a shooting range on the premises, Blus' range, where members could shoot 22 caliber guns. For special occasions, some non-members were permitted to use the club

facilities. For example, during the World War II, the Red Cross would bring veterans to the club to fish. According to club legend, most of the time was spent off in the woods with the Red Cross nurses rather than fishing.

One current member, Alan McInnes, used to fish at the Massachusetts Fish and Game Association with his father Walter McInnes around 1946. He recalls a caretaker who was a disabled war veteran who lived on a cabin on the point (where there are still signs of a septic system). According to Alan and other current members, the caretaker was not the most meticulous of custodians. Alan still has a chest of draws originally from the caretaker's cabin.



Doc Gordon October, 1991

Another former member, Sam “Colonial Ham Sam” Rabinowitz (his son Peter is still a member today), recalls that the Mass Fish and Game owned the land including the ponds that are currently owned by George Bentley. Mass Fish and Game also attempted to purchase the property that is currently owned by the Upland Game Club. Like Alan, Sam also remembers the caretaker who was known only as “Parker”, but Sam is unsure if that was his first or last name. Sam agrees with Alan's assessment of Parker's grounds keeping abilities.

Eventually, Massachusetts Fish and Game Association sold the land to Wildlife Conservation Incorporated. Wildlife Conservation owned the surrounding lands in addition to the ponds and began to charge a fee to the members of the fishing association to use the ponds and club grounds in addition to their annual club membership dues to Wildlife. The rate charged was 5% of the valuation of the land -- \$14,800 at the time. Some of the members began to get frustrated, because as they spent additional money to improve the grounds and the ponds, their fees to Wildlife increased accordingly. At the same time, members were contemplating expenditures of a few thousand dollars for improvements to the ponds and they did not want to increase their payments to Wildlife by 5% of the monies expended. Therefore, in early 1952 a number of members created the Norfolk Trout Club Committee to explore the possibility of purchasing the land from Wildlife. The committee and movement was founded by Fran Perry of Framingham.

After initial discussions between Wildlife and the newly formed Norfolk Trout Club, on June 24th, 1952, Wildlife approved the sale to the Norfolk Trout Club. Some of the concerns by members of Wildlife included the rights of the cabin owners after the sale as well as concerns about the potential loss of members to the new club. Frank Leonhardt (his nephew, Dick Leonhardt remains a member today), one of the founding members of the Norfolk Trout Club, committed that a large percentage of the new club's members would continue to support Wildlife.



Clubhouse circa 1961, note the screened in porch where the new lockers are today

The governing authority of the Norfolk Trout Club was created at the first meeting of the Board of Directors on July 15, 1952, at 182 Devonshire Street in Boston. At the meeting, Frank Leonhardt of Wellesley was elected the first Club President. Others elected included: Fran Perry of Framingham as Vice President, Fatio Pacetti of Newton as Treasurer and Dr. A. Lewis Sagoff of Newton as Secretary. The official date of incorporation of the Norfolk Trout Club was September 19, 1952. First year member dues were \$50. The member buttons were initially distributed in a different manner than currently used, with the #1 button designated to the president and #2 through #4 to the vice president, treasurer and secretary respectively. The remaining numbers were given out in random order and did not change once a member had been assigned a number. This tradition



Jack and Frank Leonhardt circa 1963

continued for quite a few years and no one knows for certain why this has been changed.

On November 11, 1952, the Norfolk Trout Club purchased the original seven land parcels which had been acquired by The Sportsman's Trust in the 1930's. The grounds purchased by the Norfolk Trout Club included a series of three ponds and surrounding land totaling 87.3 acres. The acreage was purchased by the Norfolk Trout Club for \$14,800 consisting of a cash payment of \$5,000 with the balance of \$9,800 paid over seven years with 4.5% interest. Each of the initial 50 members posted a bond of \$100 to provide the \$5,000 down payment which entitled them to membership rights including



fishing privileges and the right to construct cabins on the land.

The new club hired a full time caretaker who had been a guide in Maine. He moved into the cabin on the point with his wife and child. Another caretaker over the years was Al Ober, the full time caretaker at Upland Game who also oversaw the grounds at the Norfolk Trout Club. Other notable people who helped to care for the club over the years, include a number of Norfolk residents such as John Chaplin, Vi Ingraham (whose back hoe helped to form the dikes), and Jim Murray.

• *The Grounds* •

The Norfolk Trout Club's 87.3 acres include three ponds:

- Upper (Phillips) Pond – 9.75 Acres
- Middle (Coolidge) Pond – 2.3 Acres
- Lower (Harlow) Pond – 4.25 Acres



Middle (Coolidge) Pond & Club House, Winter

While changes to the Norfolk Trout Club have been minimal since its founding 50 years ago, there have been some minor modifications. Prior to the purchase by The Sportsman's Trust, the ponds were used for cranberry bogs. After the formation of the Norfolk Trout Club, a number of changes to the waterways were made to create a suitable environment to sustain the populations of the stocked trout and bass.

Prior to the initial opening of the club for fishing, the lower pond was drained and all of the bass were transplanted into the upper pond. The lower pond was also dredged by

a bulldozer and drag line to clean and widen the pond and to open up spring holes. This project allowed the lower pond to be used as the main trout pond. The original intention for the Upper Pond was to be used as a bass pond. The stream that now flows into the Upper Pond, Christopher Brook, was re-routed to provide additional water supply. This new stream was named for the man who was responsible for re-routing the stream to its current location, Wrightson Christopher. Mr. Christopher was later named president of the club in 1970, for a two-year term.

During his tenure as president, Mr. Christopher planted rose bushes on the Upper Pond to help keep non-members from poaching. These



bushes remain a viable deterrent even today. Other changes to the grounds include the access road to the club, which was originally called Hartford Turnpike and at one point continued across the lower dike. The dikes were rebuilt in 1961 by Jim Murray, but they were much narrower at the time and bordered by wooden barriers. They were eventually expanded and fortified with rocks primarily by, Paul Knowles and Phil Flagg.



1962 photo showing narrower dikes with Jack Leonhardt fishing (brother of founder Frank Leonhardt and father of current member Dick Leonhardt)

The upper pond was dredged around 1965. In the process, all of the trees were removed around the pond to allow access for the heavy equipment, due to its appearance at the time it was dubbed the “Cape Cod Canal.” According to some of the current members who witnessed the dredging, the dead fish were much larger and more numerous than anticipated and the bass could fill many five gallon pails.

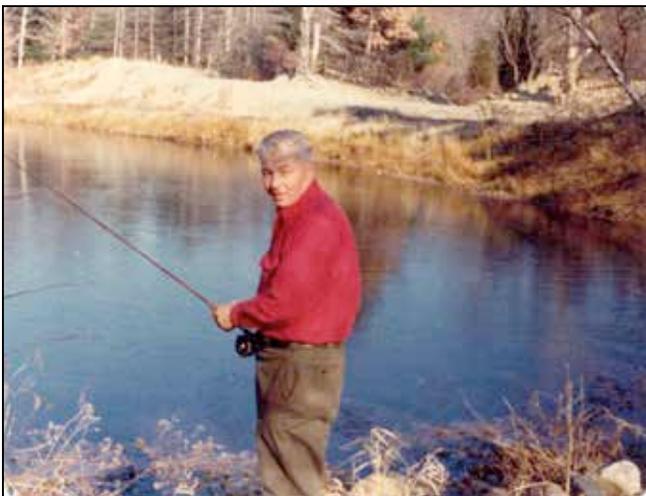


Photo circa 1965 showing the upper pond banks devoid of trees from the dredging in the previous year with Peter Vachon in the foreground

About 15 years ago, the Narrows leading to the upper pond were also dredged. Waldo Maffei and Darold Hickman were primarily responsible for this dredging. Their crew used a drag line system with limited access that made it impossible to reach the middle of the narrows from either shore, so even today the middle of the narrows



remains shallower than the deeper edges. Other areas near the dike in the Upper Pond and the near the dike in the Lower Pond were also dredged to create good “holes”. At one point the upper pond was connected to what we now call Bentley’s pond by a 24” culvert on the right side of the pond where the curve stops from the narrows into the “hole”.

After the dredgings, the ponds were annually poisoned to remove the competing fish, which according to some member there were many, including numerous very large pike. Dick Cronin, who worked for the Massachusetts Fish and Game at the time, put Retonone into the ponds to kill the fish. He would motor around the ponds in a small skiff with an outboard to distribute the poison. Many current members remember Dick as a good friend to the club and recall that helped maintain the integrity of the ponds throughout the 1970’s.



Photo circa 1971 showing Dick Cronin with Retonone, Linus Vachon in the foreground

There have been a number of cabins on the property over time -- the remnants of many remain visible in the fire pits and grill areas that are still used by members today. There was a cabin located by Rust Meadow near the narrows, which was owned by “Crib” Brown, who was a member of both the Norfolk Trout Club and Upland Game. There are still signs of the cabin’s fireplace, which is now used as a cookout grill. Russ Craft was another individual who owned a cabin on the grounds - Russ owned a greeting card company. Herm Flagg, who resided on Cleveland Street in Norfolk, owned a cabin with Al Ober. As many of the members at the time were from more urban areas in Boston and the close in suburbs, Herm would board the member’s dogs at his cabin. Fred Lennin also had a cabin that was really on the Upland Game Club land where he lived with a very grubby cocker spaniel. Gordon Goodband remembers purchasing a fly rod from Fred for \$15. He still had the rod today and it is probably worth much more than the initial \$15 investment.

The square boats that are still used today, were designed by Walter McInnes and were referred to as “Pogo Boats”. Unfortunately, the molds for the boats were lost sometime in the early 1970’s.



Walter McInnes July, 1966

Darold Hickman recalls when there was no locker room in the clubhouse, no fish and no money to buy any. Darold made the rod hangers in the clubhouse that are still used today. When he was President (1976-78) the Board wanted to charge members to use the hangers, but Darold “he wouldn’t hear of it.”

Although the current clubhouse is original, it has undergone changes over the years. What is now the new locker room area was once a screened porch. Long time members have frightful memories of the squalid conditions of the outhouse that was located in the meadow between the parking lot and cabin. Some members remember the even poorer condition of the outhouse located down towards the Upper Pond’s point.

• *The Members* •

Over the years there have been many multiple generation memberships that have remained uninterrupted since the club founding. The club's first president and one of the founding members, Frank Leonhardt, has a nephew, Dick, who remains a member of the club today. Prominent father/son and father/daughter members include: Aiello, Capezzi, Clay, Diran, Flagg, Goodband, Guzikowski, Ravinski, Rogers and Weden.



Fall Opening Day, October 1999



Birthday Celebration March, 1991 – Carl Pickhardt, George Gordon, Ken Tatro, Manny Lato

• *Stories* •

Considering the amount of time spent at the club over the past fifty years by loyal members, it's no surprise there are some interesting stories – and characters – that have evolved.

Many long time members remember John Burnett, a pillar in his Baptist church, who used to come to the club well dressed and eat all of the food. One of the members who helped to form the club as we know it today, he spent considerable time fixing up the old cabin. While not truly interested in fly-fishing, he did occasionally cast a line. On one such outing while paddling his boat ashore with his fly inadvertently trailing in the water, a very unexpected fish inhaled the fly and swam away with not only the fly, but with John's rod and reel – taking it all overboard.



Long time members also fondly remember the Wednesday night crew who spent virtually every Wednesday at the club. The core group consisted of Frank Leonhardt, Charlie Hutchinson, Dick Weden and George Bently, with an occasional guest appearance by the game warden. They would spend the early part of the day at the “Yankee D Lodge” – their codename for the Upland Game clubhouse. The name was derived from a legendary army division in World War I. They would hunt in the morning and fish in the afternoon, enjoying many cocktails throughout the day and finish the day with a dinner of Frank's Bouillabaisse, well known by all for its greatness.

Photo of John Burnett and a young David DeMars, circa 1970

The endless stories and memories include tales of members like Darold Hickman, who was famous for tying and handing out yellow Marabou Streamers. The rumor behind this generosity is that Darold's wife did not allow him to smoke his pipe in the house, so he'd escape to the basement to tie his yellow Marabous and smoke in solitude. There was the truly devoted fly fisherman, George Keegan, a paraplegic who was dressed in his fishing clothes with a fly rod across his chest at his wake (his son owns Keegan Jewelry in South Norwood). Or the legend of Arthur Cocoran who only fished with a floating line and a black gnat – and still out fished all other members. What about Dr. Chapman, who always wore a coat and necktie to the club with a straw hat? Of course there was the time Sam Rabinowitz caught a fly in his ear on a windy day and according to Sam, the doctor who removed it retained the fly until he passed away.

Hopefully, over the next fifty years there will be new stories to tell the next generation of members. Now we have a Friday night group carrying on traditions from the Wednesday crew, while creating more than a few new stories of their own! It is up to us to preserve these memories and ensure the club retains its charm, character and to create new memories for the next fifty years and beyond. We must be diligent in our efforts to ensure that the club remains, allowing others to experience the same club that we are all so fortunate to belong.



Spring Clean Up Day 2002

NORFOLK TROUT CLUB, Inc.

Presidents

1952-62	Frank N. Leonhardt
1962-63	Walter J. McInnis
1963-64	Arthur A. Corcoran
1964-66	E. Graham Bates
1966-68	C. B. Clay
1968-70	Norman Hoar
1970-72	Wrightson Christopher
1972-74	Richard B. Chapman
1974-76	Robert P. Greaves
1976-78	Darold Hickman
1978-80	Rexford A. Bristol
1980-82	George Gordon
1982-84	Richard A. Weden
1984-86	Stanley M. Lewis
1986-88	Waldo M. Maffei
1988-90	Ziegmont S. Guzikowski
1990-92	Manuel Lato
1992-94	Rienzi B. Parker, Jr.
1994-96	Paul R. Knowles
1996-98	Gary C. Rowley
1998-00	Pierre E. Provost
2000-02	Leonard Fournier, Jr.

NORFOLK TROUT CLUB, Inc.

Current Members & Year Admitted

<u>Sept. 19, 1952</u> Frank N. Leonhardt Fatio W. Facetti A. Lewis Sagoff A. Murray Ginzberg Herman C. Petterson Fred J. Lennon Rudolph J. Gross Francis A. Perry William V. Williamson	<u>1971</u> Ollie Capizzi Stan Lewis Paul O'Neil <u>1972</u> Lloyd M. Aiello Carl Pickhardt Waldo Maffei <u>1973</u> Ed McCabe <u>1975</u> Phil Flagg <u>1977</u> Dick Morse Jeff Wyman <u>1979</u> Bob Roth Herman Matthei <u>1980</u> Ziggy Guzikowski Dick Leonhardt <u>1981</u> Tom Wilde	<u>1982</u> Ren Parker <u>1983</u> Lloyd P. Aiello Maurice Hamilburg <u>1984</u> Alan Steinert <u>1985</u> Mark Jewell Gerry Palmer Bill Sullivan <u>1986</u> John Buben Mel Harris <u>1987</u> Bruce Bauman Tom Cuddy Bob Day Gordon Goodband John Lambert <u>1988</u> Bob Anderson Hugh Johnston Gary Rowley	<u>1989</u> Don Forte Cappy Fournier Paul Knowles Rich Horan Paul Zammito <u>1990</u> Tony Capizzi Gordon Goodband, Jr. Bob Hoyer Jack McCarthy Pierre Provost <u>1991</u> Harry Hanson Rick Weden <u>1992</u> Neal Clay Brock Foster <u>1993</u> Dan Bortolussi Joe Coyne Peter Grundy Jeff Stearns	<u>1994</u> Rod Brant Jay Clancy Scott Clay Larry Diran Heidi Flagg Ted Gardner Josh McCall Jeff Parsons George Skelly <u>1995</u> Bruce H. Bumpus John Ryan Dave Weden <u>1996</u> Chris Guzikowski Alan Stam <u>1997</u> John Foster Bill Goode Bob Jepsen Ed McCabe <u>1998</u> Bob Forsberg Bill Greene Bill Pounds Alan Shoolman Bill Wilkinson	<u>1999</u> Bill Hartigan Eric Kaldy Rich Lundell Lou Manzone <u>2000</u> Matt Capofreddi Bill Gardner Jim Kane David Kirshner Jeff Loucks Bob Ravinski Ben Rogers <u>2001</u> Sari Abul-Jubien John Berk Michael Grogan Stu Hartz Jim Murray Al Ravinski <u>2002</u> Dick Horan, Sr. Bob McCool Kate Lavell Bob Strayton Sal Yerardi
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Created by the Norfolk Trout Club Historical Committee:

• Bruce Bumpus • Matthew Capofreddi • Larry Diran • Jeffrey Loucks • Ben Rogers •